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Wrestler[®]

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YOUR LETTERS

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FOR MORE HARDWARE

Last year, when Bill Watts eliminated both WCW's World light heavyweight title and the

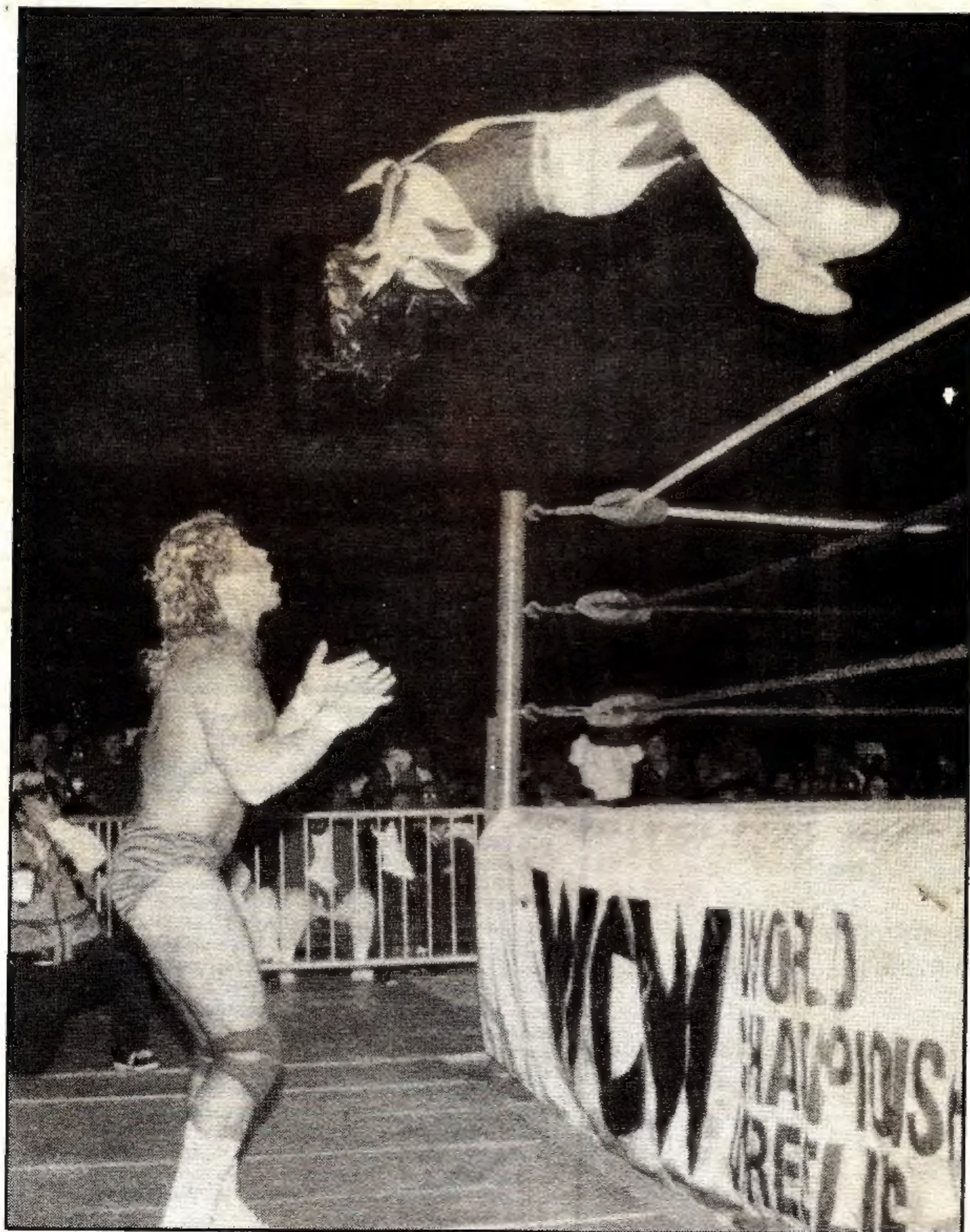
U.S. tag team title, I was skeptical. I tried to give him the benefit of the doubt. Now that he's gone, please, please, *please*

bring back these titles!

The U.S. tag championship was meant for teams that normally wouldn't have a chance against those who compete for the WCW World belts. For teams like Kent and Keith Cole, Chris Benoit and Bobby Eaton, Tom Zenk and Johnny Gunn, and even Tex Slazenger and Shanghai Pierce, this title is perfect.

The World light heavyweight belt is also one I enjoyed seeing. Watts had promised us a tournament some time in January, and it's summer already! Don't insult the fans and former champions such as Brian Pillman, Jushin Liger, Scott Anthony, and Brad Armstrong. I felt that this title was what separated WCW from the WWF. It was what made WCW the better federation.

GREG GRUITY
New York



WCW should fulfill its promise to hold a light heavyweight tournament so wrestlers like Brian Pillman and Jushin Liger can contend for a title, notes reader Greg Gruity.

LETHAL LUNA?

I have to disagree with Dave Rosenbaum's article on Luna Vachon ("The Lowdown On Luna: Why She Is Wrestling's Most Dangerous Woman!", August 1993). Sure, Luna's definitely crazy, and I can see she doesn't really care what happens when she attacks someone. But the reason I think she'll lose her feud with Sensational

Sherri is that she hasn't shown me anything at all in the ring.

Every time she goes after Sherri, it's a sneak-attack. First it was WrestleMania, then it happened on *Monday Night Raw*. She either jumps Sherri from behind or uses someone like Bam Bam Bigelow to do her dirty work. Thank goodness Sherri has a wrestler like Tatanka to come to her aid.

Once Sherri and Luna lock up in the ring, fair and square, Sherri will demonstrate her superior wrestling skills. She'll force Luna to go back home and watch some old tapes of her father and uncle to learn what *wrestling's* really about.

ERIC HABLE
West Palm Beach, FL

BADD IS GOOD

It's so nice to see an uplifting story about a wrestler away from the ring. I'm as big a wrestling fan as they get, but even I am glad to get a break from reading about the mat wars. Johnny B. Badd is indeed a good guy ("Johnny B. Badd: All He Wants To Do Is Good," August 1993). It's obvious to me that Badd is a rising star in WCW, and should win a title very soon. It'd be easy for him to take on that superstar attitude and think only of himself. Not Johnny!

Even if he were wrestling's biggest star, he'd still think of the kids first. What a class act. The only place I don't want to see him being nice is in the ring against Maxx Payne. Payne, you're going to find out just how bad this good guy is real soon!

LORETTA PANTURO
Houston

SNUBBING KERRY

I still cannot believe that the WWF and WCW have not men-



Both WCW and the WWF should have paid some sort of tribute to the late Kerry Von Erich, just as they did for Andre the Giant, laments reader Christopher McGee.

tioned anything about one of the greats in both federations, the late Kerry Von Erich. When the late, great Andre the Giant died, both federations took a minute and remembered him, but they did not say a word about Kerry. He held both the WWF Intercontinental belt and the NWA World title. I'm not insulting Andre, but I think it was really low of the two top wrestling federations.

CHRISTOPHER MCGEE
Charlotte, NC

YAY TO THE USWA

I recently attended several USWA cards, and I have to say it deserves more attention in your magazine. With wrestlers like Jerry Lawler, Jeff Jarrett, Koko B. Ware, and Brian Christopher, you get a great effort every night. Since this federation doesn't get the publicity and saturated television coverage that the WWF and WCW receive, they don't have to worry about putting on a glitzy show
(Continued on page 52)

WHAT'S HAPPENING

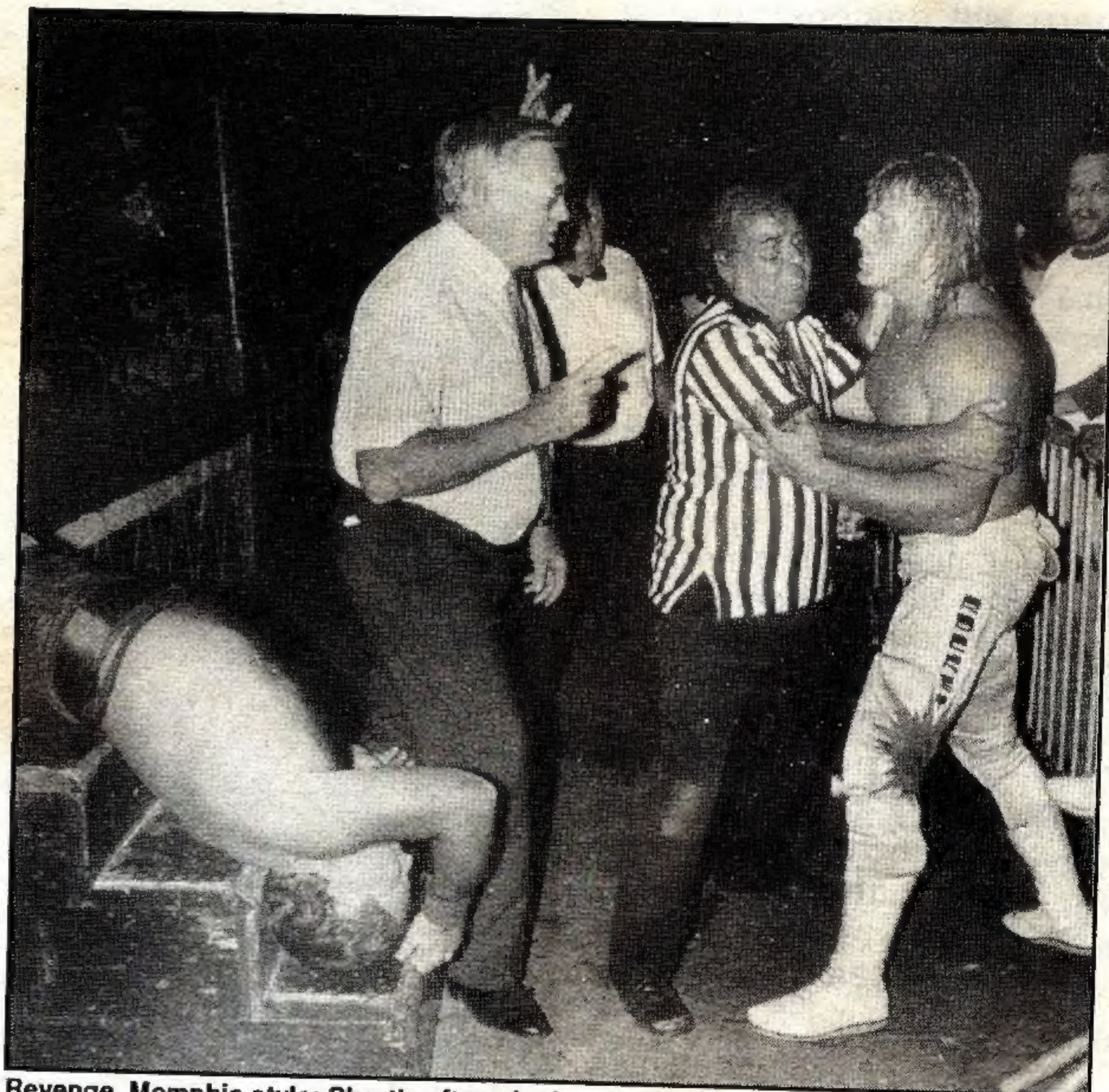
By Bill Apter

THE SHOE IS on the other foot, or rather the scepter is in the other hand. When Jerry "The King" Lawler attacked Bret Hart during the "Hitman's" coronation as the WWF's "King Of The Ring" on June 13 in Dayton, Ohio, everyone expected Hart to seek his revenge.

He had just finished three grueling matches, against **Razor Ramon**, "Mr. Perfect" **Curt Hennig**, and **Bam Bam Bigelow**, when Lawler interrupted the crowning ceremonies and demanded that Hart kiss the feet of the real "king." Bret refused, and Lawler pummeled him with his scepter, leaving him lying groggy on the steps near his throne.

No one expected **Owen Hart** would be the one to seek his brother's revenge. It happened in Memphis. Things heated up while **Papa Shango** was defending his USWA title against Owen. With **Bert Prentice** in Shango's corner, Hart was tossed from the ring. Shango asked Prentice to give him the stick he brings to ringside. Instead, Prentice helped Hart back into the ring and threw *him* the stick.

While the referee was



Revenge, Memphis style: Shortly after winning the USWA title, Owen Hart is restrained by officials following his attack of Jerry Lawler. This came barely a week after Lawler had done likewise to Owen's older brother Bret.

knocked out, Hart pummeled Shango with the stick and eventually pinned him to win the title.

Later that evening, Lawler was wrestling referee **Paul Neighbors**. Owen came to ringside and the two brawled there, with "The Rocket" getting the best of the Memphis monarch. Lawler challenged him again

later in the evening near the dressing room. Owen accepted and kicked the tar out of Jerry again, leaving *Lawler* dazed and hurt on the steps. Maybe Memphis is the new "City Of Brotherly Love," or at least "Brotherly Revenge."

In WCW, two countrymen appear headed for a ring con-



WCW could have its own "Battle Of Britain" if the patrician Lord Steven Regal and the plebeian Davey Boy Smith ever get in the ring. Such a match is on the backburner for now, due to Smith's other commitments.



frontation. You had to expect Englishmen **Davey Boy Smith** and **Lord Steven Regal** to meet someday in the ring, what with Regal and manager **Sir William** snobbishly telling everyone how they are the best of the blue-bloods. Regal made some comments about Smith at a recent TV taping.

Smith and **Sting**, however, have their hands full at the moment with power-bombers **Big Van Vader** and **Sid Vicious**, so Smith vs. Regal may have to wait.

Teddy Long continues to make news, finally revealing the identity of the new wrestler he's been training. "The man" he keeps referring to is none other than veteran **Thunderbolt Patterson**. Let's hope **Brian Pillman** and **Steve Austin** have learned something about respecting their elders from recent encounters with **Ric Flair** and **Arn Anderson**. If they make fun of this ring legend,

they'll really have their hands full.

Austin recently lost a match to new Horseman **Paul Roma**. Roma used a small package to score the pin and was saved

from an outside attack by **Pillman** when Arn came to the rescue.

Another new addition to WCW is a team known as **The Posse**.

(Continued on page 58)

STEVE ANDERSON'S VIEW



NO HOLDS BARRIED

with David Rosenbaum

MAYBE THIS IS a column for *Wrestling 93: Rulebreaker*, our evil twin sister publication, but I don't have a column in *Rulebreaker* so it will have to go here. Memo to the editors: Leave this alone!

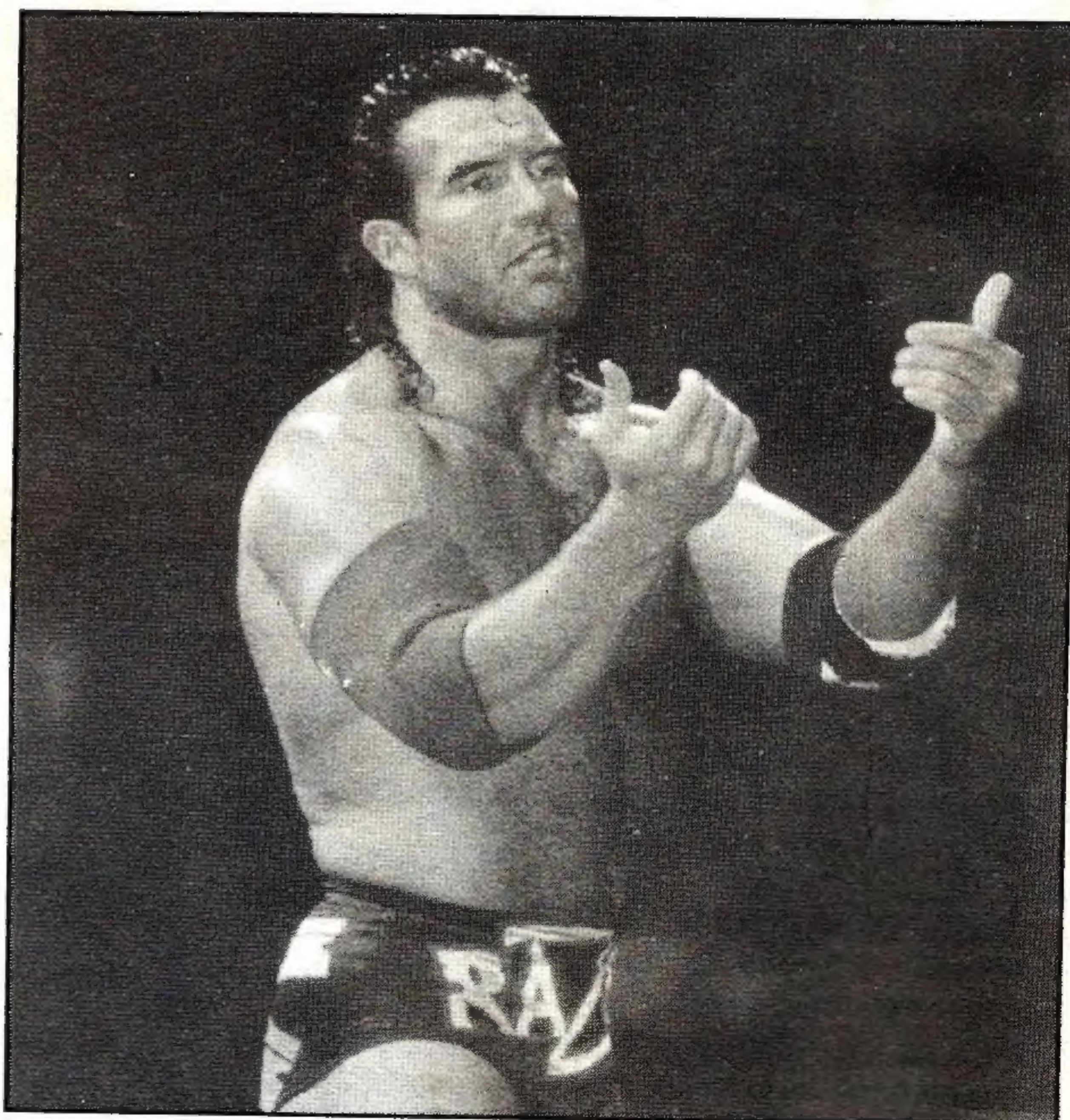
I've always been fascinated by wrestling fans and their reactions to certain events. I've never been able to understand how they can so easily forgive and forget (as in the cases of Sgt. Slaughter, Randy Savage, The Undertaker, etc.) or how they'll root for somebody one day and against him the next.

On June 21, I attended the WWF's *Monday Night Raw* at the Mid-Hudson Civic Center in Poughkeepsie, New York. Now, I see a lot of cards during any given year, but this one was special. I attended dressed as a fan, without my notebook and pen.

It was, as usual, an educational experience. I didn't need a notebook and pen to remember what happened on this night.

Memo to the fans: You're still an amazing bunch.

Try to follow this sequence of events:



In the space of a few minutes, Razor Ramon went from villain to hero in the fans' eyes—without doing anything to warrant this sudden change.

Every fan in the building was eagerly anticipating the rematch between Razor Ramon and The Kid, now labeled the 1-2-3 Kid for shocking Ramon on an earlier *Raw*. Ramon desperately

wanted revenge, and thus offered Kid \$2,500 for a rematch, then upped the package to \$5,000. Finally at \$10,000, Kid accepted.

(Continued on page 50)

BY
ANDY
RODRIGUEZ

THE ULTIMATE WRESTLER

RANDY SAVAGE, BY getting involved in the best-two-of-three falls encounter between Marty Jannetty and Doink the Clown at *WWF Monday Night Raw*, demonstrated he's not ready to settle down to a life of broadcasting just yet.

Jannetty lost the deciding fall after a second Doink climbed out from under the ring and pummeled him. Incensed, Savage left his ringside broadcast position and tossed both Doinks in the ring. Realizing what had happened, the ref reversed his decision.

The "Macho Man" may have had no right to interfere, but he did and is proud of it. He saw an injustice and acted forcefully to correct it. Is that the job of a broadcaster? He'll let the ethicists decide.

Savage truly enjoys working behind a microphone. He loves jousting with Bobby Heenan and, occasionally, Vince McMahon. He offers his opinions without, as we say about Matt Brock, "fear or favor." With his throaty voice, Savage often is difficult to understand, but he remains fun to listen to.

Underlying his commentary, though, is a tone of always wanting to be part of the action. Savage is not by nature a spectator. He possesses a thirst for competition matched by very few of his contemporaries.

He demonstrated that in his days as a minor league baseball player, when contractual obligations prevented him from competing in other pro sports. To circumvent any problems, Savage donned a mask in the off-season and wrestled as "The Spider." He took that chance for three years before deciding on a full-time wrestling career.

He demonstrated that in 1979, when he challenged his own brother, Lanny Poffo, for the International Championship Wrestling title. In winning the belt from Lanny, Savage wrestled just as intensely as he would have against any non-relative. The power of family did not diminish his lust for gold.

Five years later, both brothers demonstrated their desire to compete by wrestling each other in a completely empty Mid-South Coliseum. Jerry Lawler, who refereed the bout, said later that while Poffo seemed to be lost without fan support, Savage was completely focused on the match. For an athlete so connected to crowd energy, that's a testament to how seriously he took the bout.

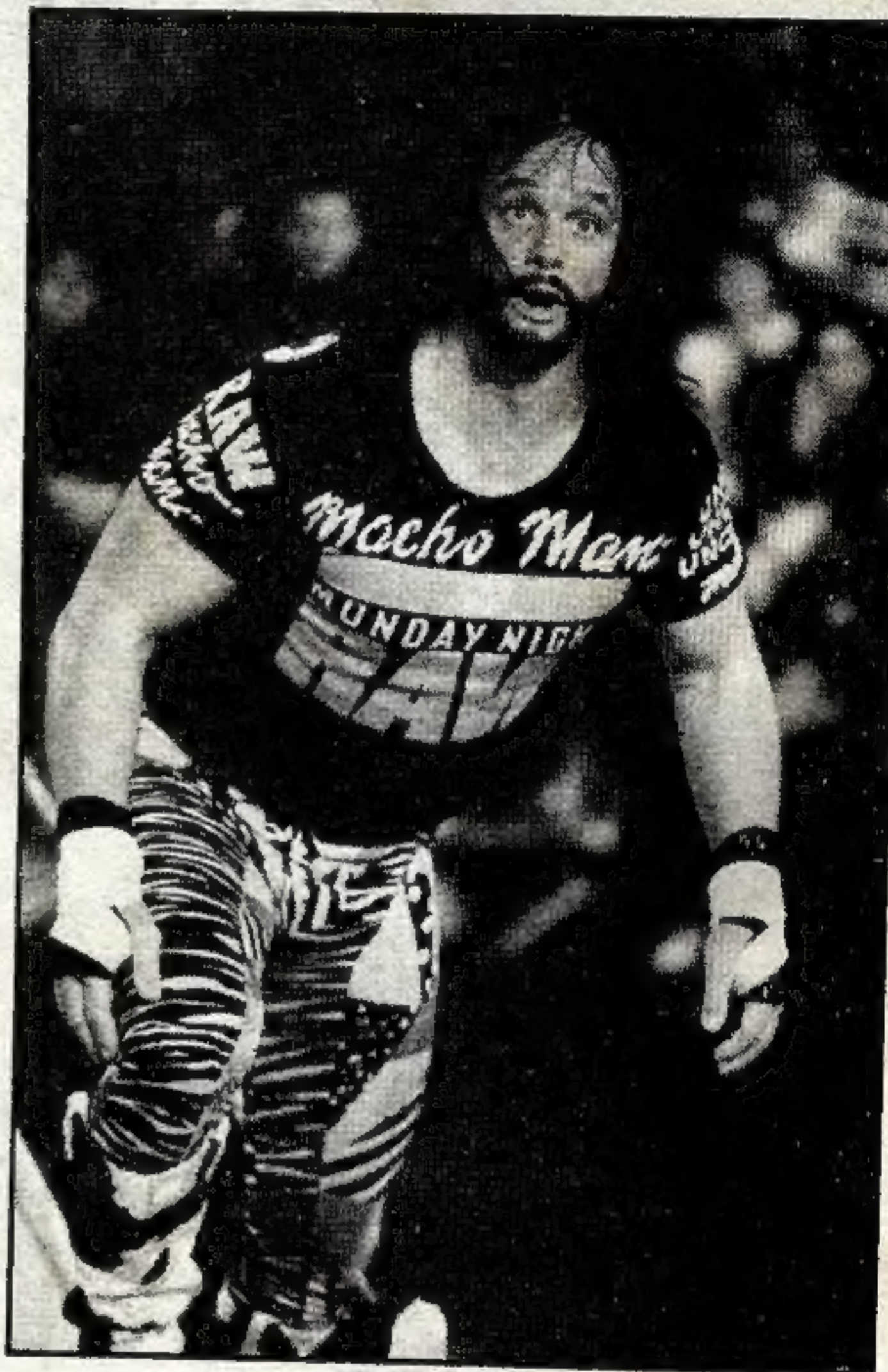
When he defended the Intercontinental title against Rick Steamboat at *WrestleMania III* in 1987, Savage could have wrestled defensively against a foe desperate for revenge. Instead, he was equally aggressive. He lost the championship, but in the process gave us the Match of the Year.

Some may argue much of Savage's intensity comes more from a rulebreaking "Macho Madness" than from a healthy love of competition. This is, after all, a man who felt driven to accuse Hulk Hogan of "lusting after" his ex-wife and manager Elizabeth. And after losing the World title to Hogan in 1989, Savage took on the bogus "Macho King" designation and treated it as though it was a legitimate prize.

While it's true Savage still has a bit of rulebreaker in him, he's evolved into a solid fan favorite. Last year, he stood loyally by The Ultimate Warrior, whom he caused to lose the World belt the year before by smashing him in the head with a scepter. Sitting next to Heenan at the broadcast table has reaffirmed his instinct to support those wrestlers who do the right thing.

His place, however, is on the mat, full-time. His compatriots need that energy, intensity, and commitment in the ring with them.

Many wrestlers are qualified for color commentary. But there is only one "Macho Man." □



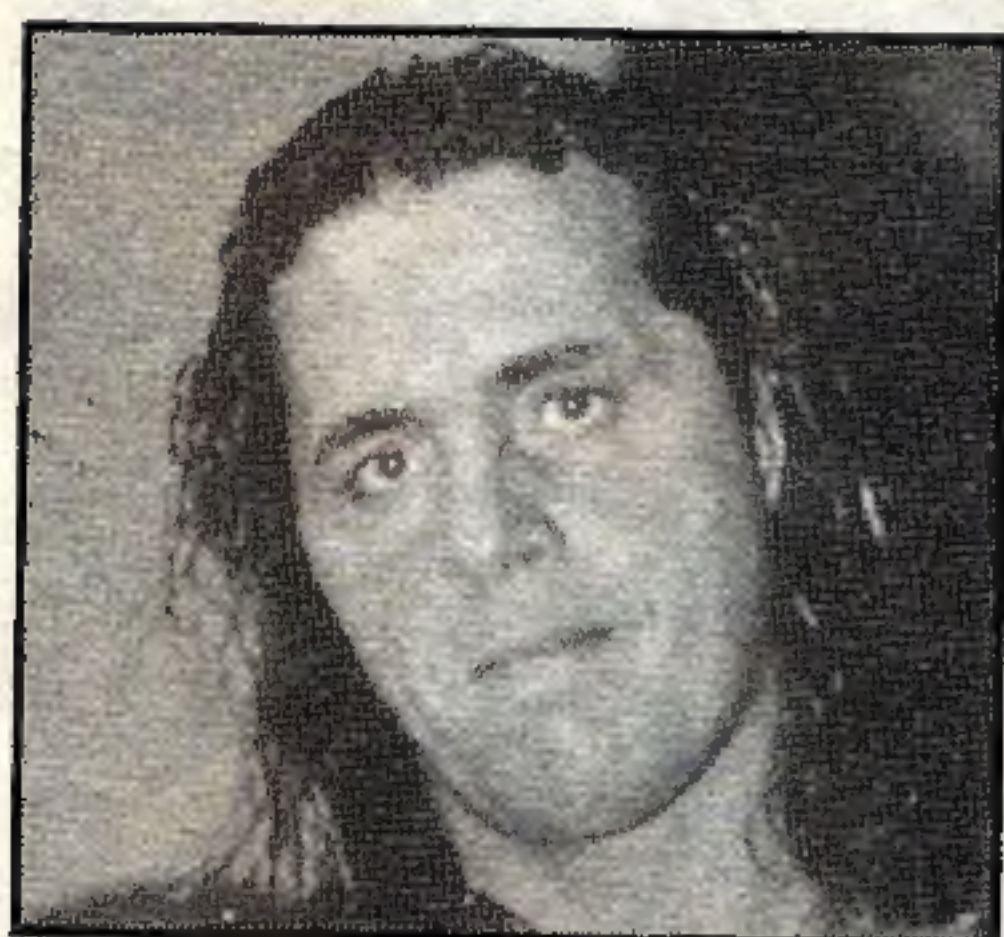
Randy Savage

Thumbs Up

Each issue, *The Wrestler* will praise the noteworthy and damn those who violate the honor of wrestling. The praiseworthy receive a Thumbs Up, the disgraceful are marked with a Thumbs Down. Here is this month's roll of honor and shame.



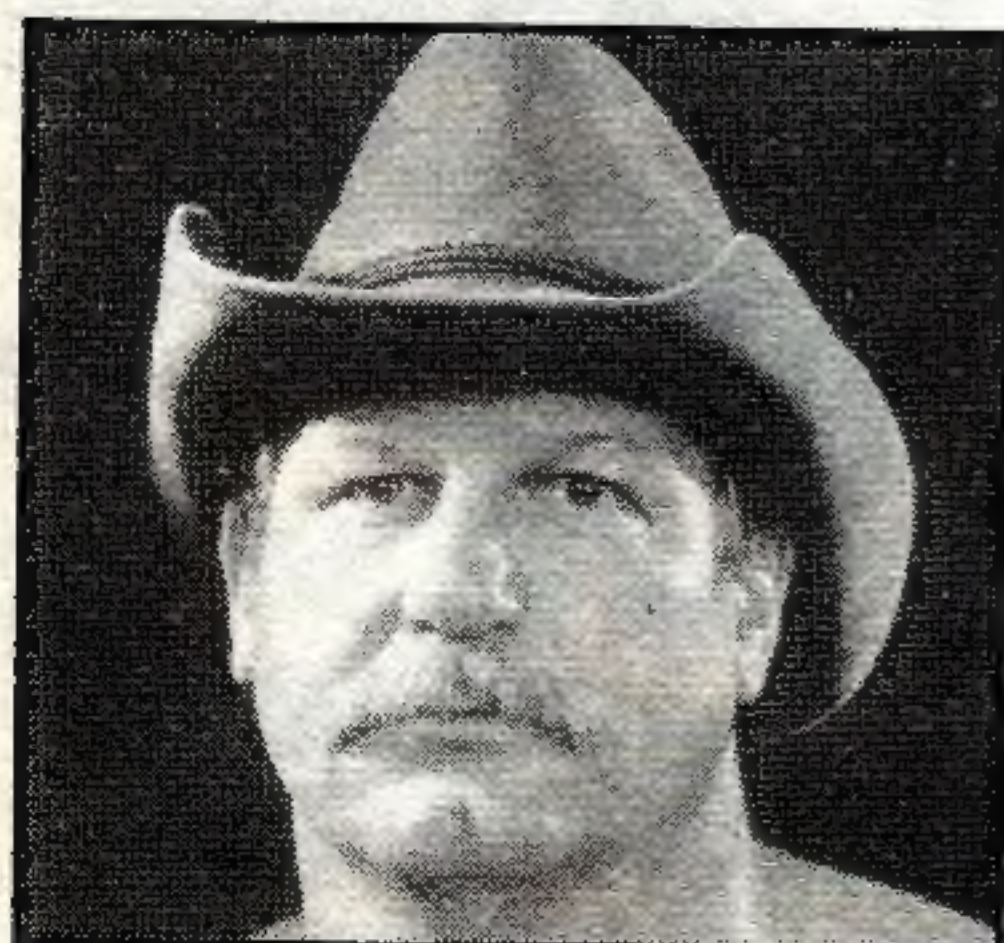
Thumbs Up to Ric Flair. The "Nature Boy" made a superb comeback at Clash of the Champions XXIII, even if it was marred by Barry Windham's interference (see *Thumbs Down*). Flair faces a hard road in his attempt to win a 10th world title but looked fit and ready when he and Arn Anderson wrestled tag team champions Steve Austin and Brian Pillman. It was also nice to hear the fans rooting for Flair. His career has been so long, and so outstanding, that he deserves support in the twilight of his years.



Thumbs Up to Bret Hart. What a performance by the "Hitman" at the "King Of The Ring" tournament. Exhausted and worn out after difficult matches against Razor Ramon and Curt Hennig—two of the WWF's top competitors—Hart looked overmatched in the final against a well-rested Bam Bam Bigelow. But he displayed the perseverance and stamina that made him WWF World champion, fighting to the finish and beating Bigelow. A marvelous victory! Unfortunately, Jerry Lawler spoiled the coronation by attacking Hart. Not to worry, Bret; you're *our* king!



Thumbs Up to Brad Armstrong. While his father, former Smoky Mountain Commissioner Bob Armstrong, sat in a hospital, Brad returned to SMW in order to get revenge against The Heavenly Bodies. Bob needs all the help he can get in his battle with the Bodies, but a man at his age shouldn't be going back into the ring. That's a job for Brad, who also competes in WCW. This move showed true loyalty and sportsmanship. Going to SMW could be seen in some parts as a step down, but Brad is doing it because dad needs him. Father's Day must have been a happy one in the Armstrong home!

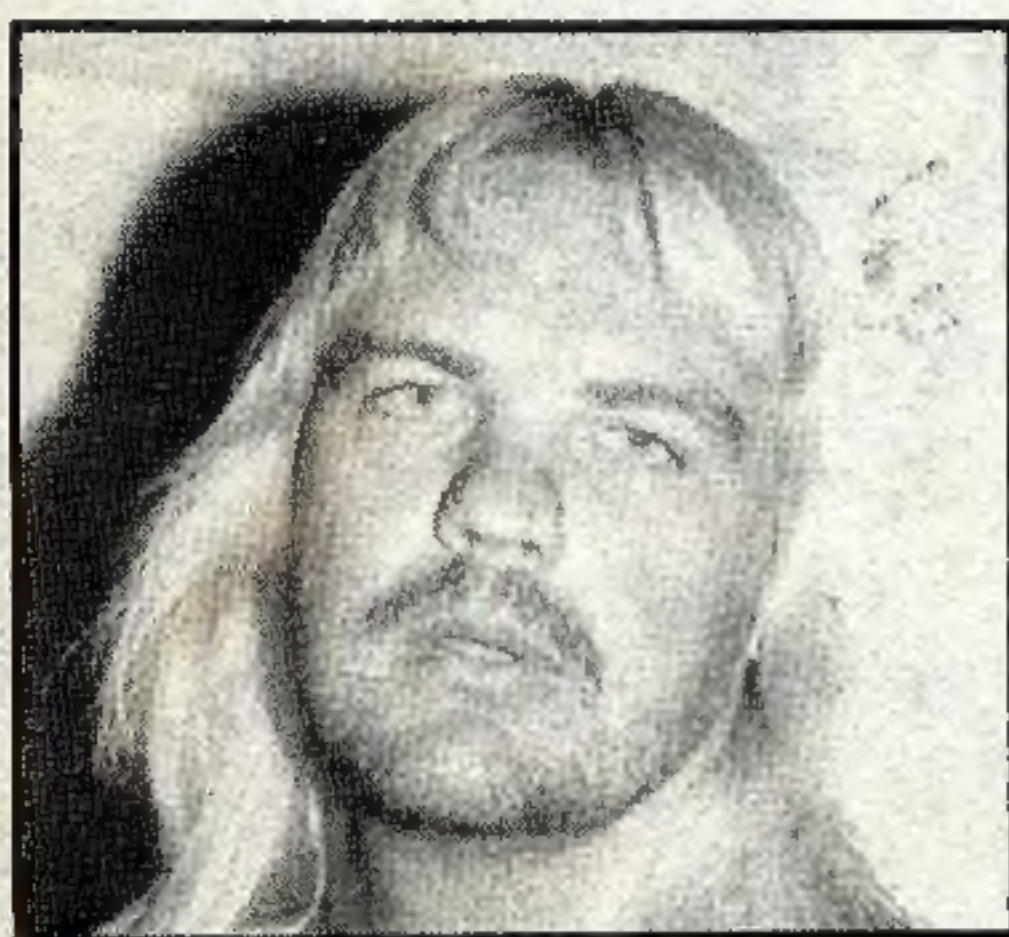


Thumbs Up to Stan Hansen (with an assist to Terry Gordy). These tough guys showed the true spirit of wrestling recently, when forced to face each other in the final of a tournament in Japan. The best of friends, their competitive instincts took over for a night. When the match was over, Hansen and Gordy were friends again. The point is, there's no reason friends can't wrestle friends. After all, in baseball, Dwight Gooden pitches against his nephew, Gary Sheffield! It's too bad so many federations won't let fan favorites take on each other; they're missing out on a good thing.

Thumbs Down



Thumbs Down to The Kid. Or the 1-2-3 Kid, as he is more popularly known these days—as in “one, two, three, take the money and run.” Credit Kid for beating Ramon on *Monday Night Raw* in one of the great upsets of recent times. Unfortunately, Kid was equally despicable for his actions in the rematch. Just when it looked as if he’d stand in and fight like a man, he stole Ramon’s \$10,000 and hightailed it in a getaway car. No wonder he had upped the ante every week! Kid committed a crime for which he deserves to be arrested, even if Vince McMahon condoned his actions.



Thumbs Down to Barry Windham. We understand his anger with Ric Flair and Arn Anderson, but we don’t understand why he had to interfere in the WCW World tag team title match at Clash of the Champions XXIII. Flair and Anderson were on the verge of winning the belts when Windham interfered. The “Lone Wolf” should have left the match alone and gained revenge afterward. We think Windham is asking for trouble, essentially begging Flair to come after his NWA title. That’s something he should want no part of, given his past failures against the “Nature Boy.”



Thumbs Down to Brian Lee. Here’s living proof how money can buy some people. When Ron Wright put a \$20,000 bounty on Smoky Mountain champion Tracey Smothers, Lee stepped forward and said, “I’ll take it!”, quickly turning against his old friend. After Smothers defeated Kevin Sullivan in a bounty match, Tony Anthony and Sullivan attacked the champ. Lee came to the ring with a chair, presumably to help Smothers, and cleared the ring. When Smothers sat in the chair, Lee—now managed by the dubious Tammy Fytch—attacked him. Some friend.



Thumbs Down to Mr. Fuji. Why does Yokozuna’s evil, salt-throwing manager have to embarrass the U.S.? Because he’s evil, of course. Why can’t he be satisfied with Yokozuna’s questionable, controversial victory over Hulk Hogan for the WWF World title? His ridiculous ravings only lessened the joy among fans in the Orient. Having engineered the situation that robbed Hogan of the belt, Fuji chose to hold the celebration on the *U.S.S. Intrepid*. He said Hulkamania is dead; we don’t think so. He’s merely writing the script for Yokozuna’s doom.

CORRESPONDENTS

REPORTS

Richmond, VA (*Correspondents: Jim Gelsleichter & Paul Hundley*): Then-WWF World tag team champions Ted DiBiase and Irwin R. Schyster seemed more concerned with special referee Sgt. Slaughter than they did their challengers, Hulk Hogan and Brutus Beefcake.

The champs aimed for an advantage before the match began, attacking Hogan and Beefcake as they entered the squared circle. It didn't take long for the "Hulkster" and "The Barber" to clear the ring.

A few minutes passed before DiBiase and Schyster got Beefcake in the ring and ruthlessly double-teamed him before Brutus somehow managed to get to his corner to tag Hogan. A four-way brawl ensued. When Hogan had DiBiase in position for an easy pin, the crowd went wild. Slaughter, however, was not there to make the three-count. The champs were so worried about losing the belts that they resorted to grabbing their briefcase. Slaughter caught the weapon before it could do any damage and used it on DiBiase and Schyster himself! He called for the bell and disqualified Money Inc., enabling them to



Ted DiBiase traps Brutus Beefcake in an abdominal stretch. Later, Money Inc. would be disqualified for bringing the metal briefcase into the ring.

retain the title.

In other bouts: Yokozuna beat Hacksaw Duggan ... Mr. Hughes pinned Virgil ... The Steinners defeated the makeshift team of Blake Beverly & Damien

Dimento ... Crush and Doink fought to a double-countout ... Luna Vachon defeated Sensational Sherri ... Owen Hart beat Terry Taylor.

(Continued on page 54)

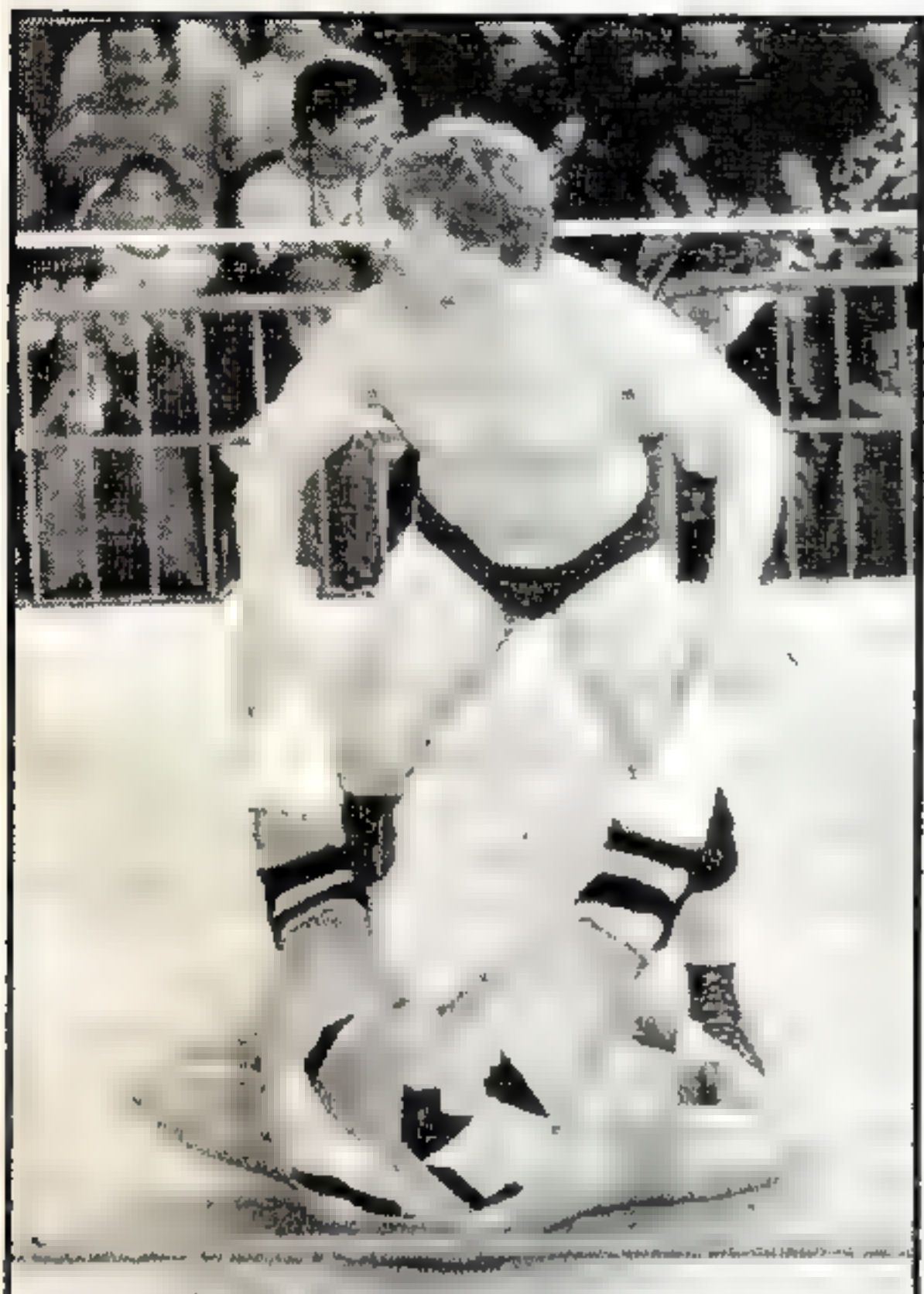
WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD FANS!

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to:

CORRESPONDENTS EDITOR, BOX 956, FT. WASHINGTON, PA 19034

Q: "My question is for Verne Gagne: What do you think of Bob Backlund's WWF comeback? Do you think he has a chance of winning a championship?"—Bruce D. Gray, Orlando, FL



While Verne Gagne admires Bob Backlund's comeback, he fears it may be too late for him to regain a WWF title.

A: "Let me tell you, Bruce, Bobby has more heart than any wrestler I've ever seen," replied Gagne. "For that reason alone, I would never bet against Bob Backlund. A friend of mine told me about some matches Backlund had against Bret Hart a few weeks back, and even though Hart won them, my friend said it looked like the Bob Backlund of old. However, I'm concerned that Bobby waited a little too long to start his comeback, and, I'm sorry to say, wrestling has changed since Bob held the WWF belt, so the odds are against him. I'd still give him an outside chance at capturing a title. I did okay wrestling in my later years, so why couldn't Backlund do the same?"

YOU ASKED US

Here's the monthly feature which YOU get to write! It's your chance to have a top wrestler answer YOUR questions!

Only the best questions will be answered—so put on your thinking caps and come up with some good ones! Address your questions—and who you would like to have answer them—to: **YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER, Box 956, Ft. Washington, PA 19034.**

Q: "My question is for Eddie Gilbert: How do you feel when you wrestle against your own brother?"—Darrell Stewart, Telford, Nova Scotia, Canada

A: "I've said it time and time again: Just because we're family doesn't mean we have to get along, and it doesn't mean we can't wrestle in some pretty lowdown dirty matches," replied an angry Gilbert. "It's no secret my brother and me never really hit it off, even when we were little kids. Maybe it was a case of sibling rivalry gone too far. I don't know, and I don't care. My only concern has always been my wrestling career. When I stare across the ring, I don't care who my opponent is. I just want to pummel him into submission. That's the way it is when I wrestle my brother, too. Maybe someday we'll patch up our differences, but I real-

ly don't worry about it much."

Q: "My question is for The Hollywood Blonds, Steve Austin and Brian Pillman: Don't you guys get sick of wrestling such no-talent bums as Marcus Alexander Pukewell and 2 Cold Barfio?"—Tony Finley, Liberty, SC

A: "I don't believe it," answered a beaming Pillman. "Finally, I hear from an *intelligent*



The Hollywood Blonds control 2 Cold Scorpio off the top rope. The Blonds have prevailed against Scorpio and Marcus Alexander Bagwell, and say they'll do so against Ric Flair and Arn Anderson.

wrestling fan. Tony, you couldn't be more right. That's why Steve and I had to do this 'Brush With Greatness' tour. Since there's obviously no team around that's anywhere near our level, we give title shots—out of the kindness of our hearts—to wannabes like Scorpio and Bagwell. It's kind of like charity work. Why do you think Scorpio went to Japan for a while? He just couldn't take the heat here. Now Ric Flair and Arn Anderson want their turn in our spotlight. We'll be glad to beat them a few times. Gee, Arn and Ric, you really scare us!"

Q: "I have a question for Sting:
(Continued on page 56)

INTRODUCING BOBBY BLAZE

WHAT A FOE Bobby Blaze picked for his first major wrestling feud!

Imagine standing in the ring, waiting for your opponent to saunter down the aisle, knowing you've incurred the wrath of one of Smoky Mountain's most ornery and unpredictable men: "Dirty White Boy" Tony Anthony. That's the predicament in which Blaze, one of SMW's newest competitors, now finds himself.

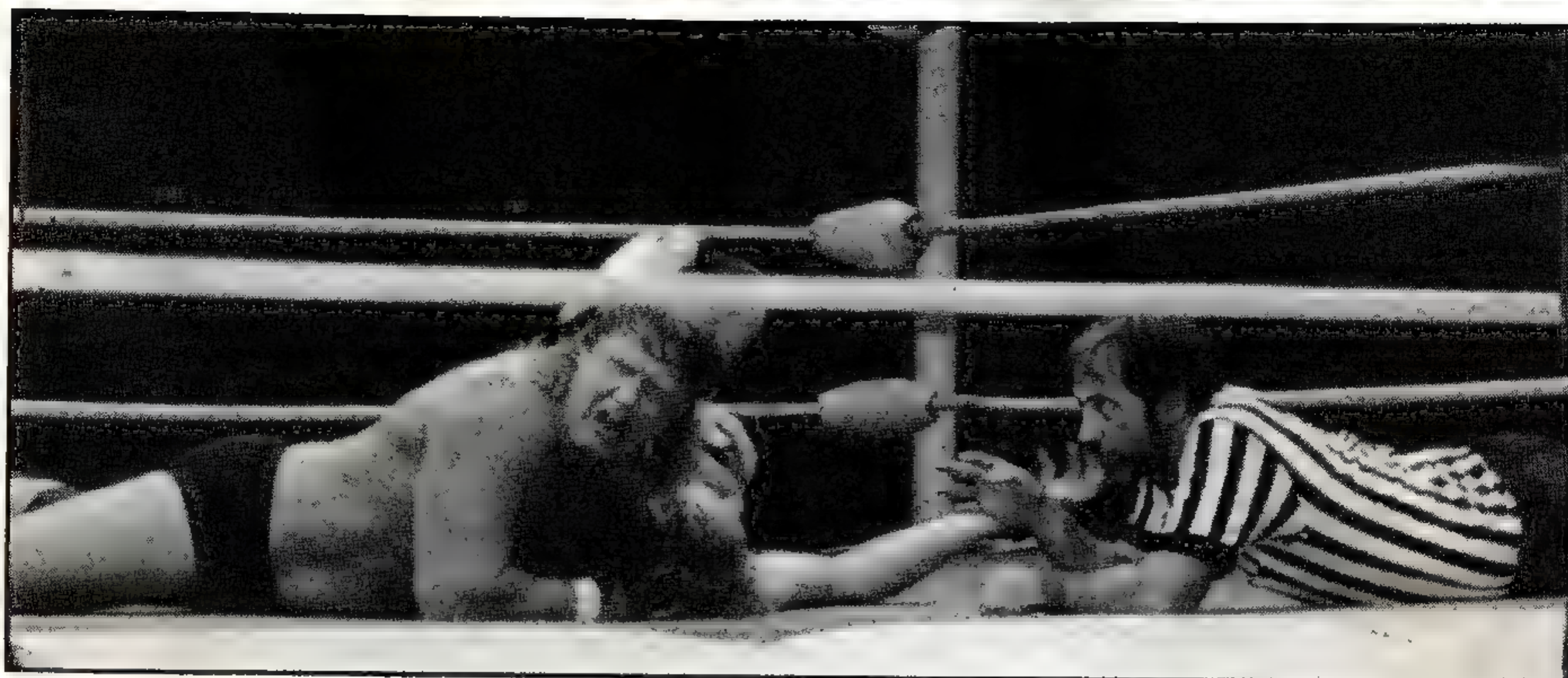
Now Blaze has heard all the warnings about Anthony—how he would do anything he could to win a match, how unstable he is, how he is conveniently "changing" his birthplace from Bucksport, Tennessee, to New York City.

"I know my time is right," Blaze said. "I talked to a lot of the guys around here, and they warned me about Anthony. But they've also helped me to plan a strategy to beat him. I'm not here to play around. I want the toughest competition Smoky Mountain can offer.

"It seems like all my life I've



A one-time wrestling roadie, Bobby Blaze has fulfilled his childhood dream of competing. The Kentucky native has already won the Smoky Mountain TV title, and could make further waves in the federation



Bobby Blaze pins Greg Smit during a bout in Australia, one month before his debut in Smoky Mountain.

been waiting for a chance like this. I feel like I have to go for it and teach that 'White Boy' some respect for the South. I think he's forgotten his roots, but I'll remind him."

Bold statements from a man of relatively humble beginnings. From the age of 15, Blaze spent a lot of his time around the ring—*around the ring*—not in it. Already a huge wrestling fan, the Ashland, Kentucky, native had some friends whom he occasionally helped set up rings before matches in nearby Lexington.

"There's nothing like being a roadie," Blaze recalled. "I got to be a part of the whole behind-the-scenes operation. I was hoping I'd get to meet some people, maybe get some tips on how to get into the sport myself. I hit the jackpot, all right."

Blaze befriended Scufflin' Hillbilly Rip Collins, who gave him the encouragement he needed to turn pro later in life. Over the next six years, however, he would be content to set up rings and later attend Lees College in Jackson, Kentucky. He played college basketball,

but in his heart he was no hooper.

"Playing basketball kept me in shape," said the 6'1", 231-pounder, "but I knew someday I had to get in there and wrestle. You hear people say, if you don't chase your dream, you'll regret it the rest of your life. I'm livin' proof of that."

As a kid, Blaze went to matches as often as possible. But he didn't view his favorites—particularly Terry Funk—in the manner the average fan would.

"I'd watch Funk's eyes during his matches," Blaze said. "Most times he'd be all bloody and everything, but I knew by his eyes that he always had something left. I wanted to get that look, develop that attitude."

The dream was finally realized in September of 1988 when Blaze debuted in Virginia against Rick Newsome and won by disqualification. He later spent time in Nova Scotia, wrestling stars such as Leo Burke and Cuban Assassin to gain experience.

After independent stints in Florida, South Africa, and Australia, Blaze went big time in April in Smoky Mountain, a fed-

eration known for its no-holds-barred, vicious, and bitter feuds.

"I think this is the perfect place for me," he said. "Some of the guys down here are ruthless, but that's fine with me. Besides, I'll always be a Southern boy in my heart, and I don't want to go too far from home."

Recently, Blaze's *name* was in the right place at the right time. After Brian Lee retired the SMW TV title following five successful defenses, both Blaze's and Anthony's names were drawn from a hat. They wrestled for the title, and Blaze scored a stunning upset. Since then, Blaze has claimed in interviews that Anthony will never make him quit. As a result, Anthony has not-so-wisely accepted the stipulation that he cannot win the title by pinfall; he must make Blaze give up.

"'White Boy' thinks he's the toughest guy here," Blaze said. "Let him prove it to me in the ring. I'll never quit. He'll find out no one has more heart than Bobby Blaze."

Smoky Mountain fans will get the chance to judge that in the months ahead. □

Q&A

Each month, *The Wrestler* will present a "Question and Answer" forum with an important figure in the wrestling world. It is your chance to meet wrestling's biggest stars as they answer the questions uppermost in the fans' minds



Jimmy Snuka withstands J.T. Smith's assault en route to successfully defending his ECW TV title. The veteran "Superfly" can still hold his own with his younger foes.

Q: Jimmy, it seems like just a couple of years ago you were in the wrestling wilderness, so to speak. Now you're among its top independent competitors. Why is that?

A: Sometimes a man has to look deeply within himself. You know, take a step back and try to find out what it is that he wants. I took those steps, and what I learned is that it is in my blood and in my bones to wrestle. The fire inside me still burns hot. After all this time, I am still the "Superfly."

Q: It seems odd that you would join a group like The Dangerous Alliance. What does Paul E. Dangerously offer your career?

A: Dangerously is a smart man. Very smart. The brother is young, but he knows this business well. These people here in ECW, these officials here, they think that maybe Dangerously is trying to rip them off. He is only looking out for his wrestlers. This is the type of man I want in my corner.

Q: You must know that many of your longtime supporters are



JIMMY SNUKA

SOMEONE FORGOT TO tell Jimmy Snuka that an invitation to compete at events like Slamboree is a sign your career is almost over. The "Superfly" is as active now as he's been at any point in his fabled 24-year career.

The Fiji Islands native currently holds the ECW TV title, which he defends as part of Paul E. Dangerously's reconstituted "Dangerous Alliance." His partners include Eddie Gilbert, Dark Patriot, and his old hated rival, Don Muraco.

Snuka's also not content to stay in one area. He's traveled to the Pacific Northwest, taking on the likes of Jesse Barr and Col. DeBeers, with whom he had one of the most bitter feuds in AWA history. In fact, Snuka is considering signing for tours of Russia and Jordan.

Friends and foes alike report they have never seen "Superfly" so pumped up for action. Are we looking at a "new" Jimmy Snuka, or simply a man with a renewed sense of purpose?

In an attempt to answer that question, Senior Writer Andy Rodriguez interviewed Snuka in Philadelphia before a recent ECW title defense against J.T. Smith.

upset about your alliance with Dangerously.

A: Yes, and to those people I say that sometimes in this sport you have to do things you don't like. In another time and another place, maybe I wouldn't need a guy like Dangerously. But right now I do. I understand if under those circumstances the people cannot support me. I never want to let the people down. They have been fair with me.

Q: One of your stablemates is Don Muraco. You guys had some amazing battles for the WWF Intercontinental title about a decade ago. Even though you're teammates now, does any animosity remain?

A: What went down between me and Muraco is a lot of bad things. A lot of bad, nasty memories. Both of us will never forget them. There are times I look over at the brother and want to rip his head off. I am sure he often feels the same way. It still frustrates me today that I never won that Intercontinental belt of his.

With all my success, that is one I truly wanted. But that was all a very long time ago. To think about that old feud all the time would poison my spirit. My first concern is with today and tomorrow. If Muraco can help me out, that is okay with me. It would be stupid to neglect the help of such a fine wrestler.

Q: There is another old feud, though, you won't let rest: the one between you and Col. DeBeers.

A: With him it is a different story, because that guy has never stopped insulting me. Imagine, he calls me a dirty animal. He is the real animal. He is a snake who won't treat people with respect. You look at a man like that and think what a shame it is he should be allowed to wrestle. He thinks he is a superior human being, but he is the one who is inferior. I get pleasure in using my fists to teach that man a lesson in decency.

Q: The last time I conducted a formal interview with you, you

were on your way home to recover from DeBeers' attempt to end your career: two face-first piledrivers on the concrete arena floor.

A: You had to remind me, huh, brother? It was almost seven years ago, but I can still feel the pain. Not even Muraco was ever so brutal. There you have another reason for me to despise DeBeers. That man is a danger, and I will do all I can to get him out of this sport.

Q: You've also been wrestling Jesse Barr in Portland. What's the nature of your dispute with him?

A: Barr is another guy with a big mouth. He is not as dangerous as DeBeers, but he's another one of these people who thinks he is superior to me. These men are the type that maybe you have to knock in the head a hundred times before they get the message. I will fly out to Portland once a week if necessary to get them both. I feel it is that important.

Q: Does Dangerously appreciate you piling up all these frequent-

flier miles?

A: He understands what I have to do. My business with the Dangerous Alliance does not interfere with my other matches. Everything is cool with my partners as well. I am always there for them when they need me. There is a lot to do, but I have enough freedom to accomplish it. My teammates also have much business outside the Alliance, and I have no hard feelings about that.

Q: Let's say that on a day you had a match scheduled with DeBeers, Dangerously needed you to substitute for a injured teammate. What would you do then?

A: You brothers in the press love to speculate, true? That would be a matter for me and him to discuss. This is not the place for it. In these matters, privacy is what counts. I am a strong member of the Alliance. We are a solid force here in ECW. It is important for our opponents to know that.

Q: I'm sure your opponents in particular realize that, because you've been actively defending ECW belt. After tonight's match with J.T. Smith, you have a defense against Tommy Cairo. How do you size up these guys?

A: They are two young men who wrestle hard. Maybe a lot of

people around the country don't know them, but they are what you call up-and-comers. Smith has a lot of speed and agility. Cairo is a very powerful kid. I take both brothers very seriously. On the other hand, I possess the experience they lack. That is why I don't believe either fellow will win my belt. It will be a long time before this particular championship leaves my waist.

Q: Dangerously's tactics can't hurt.

A: What do you imply, my friend?

Q: If you get in trouble, Paul most likely will interfere. That's obvious to anyone who knows anything about him.

A: Brother, somebody didn't tell



Snuka has put aside his longtime feud with Magnificent Muraco, now a teammate in the new Dangerous Alliance. He says dwelling on old rivalries poisons his spirit.

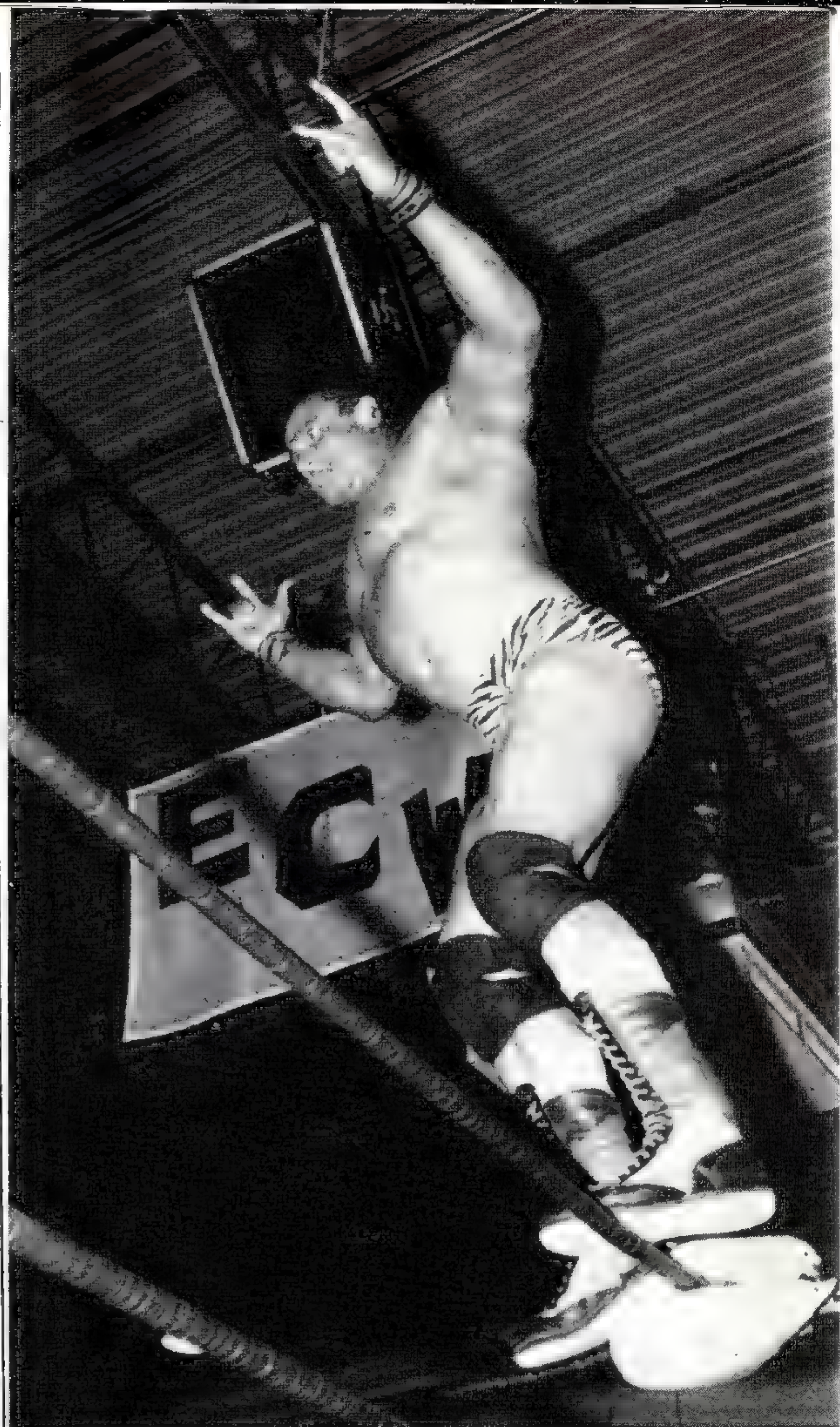
this to the "Superfly," because I win due to my own talents. If the man gets involved, that's his own concern. I don't tell him how to manage and he doesn't tell me how to wrestle. I will admit that maybe sometimes he goes too far, but he is still a young man and in time he will learn the proper restraint. When I win, it is because I am the better man. It is not because of Dangerously's telephone.

Q: Has Paul used that phone to call any travel agents for you? I hear you're considering a tour of Russia.

A: I have been around a long time, brother, but I am always looking for new experiences. It is true I have been speaking with some promoters about a tour of Russia. I am also thinking about wrestling in the country of Jordan. They tell me that the people in these places have heard of the "Superfly" and are eager to see him compete. Like I have always said, I enjoy giving the people what they want. I will go anywhere to test myself against good competition. The travel does not bother me.

Q: It continues to amaze folks just how active you have been. Why this need to go anywhere, do anything?

A: First of all, I love this sport more than anything. Like I said before, I love to compete with all my heart and soul. This is something I believe I will feel until I am a very old man. You know, 24 years in this sport may seem like a long time, but it's just a number. It means nothing to me. Today, look out and see all the challenges. Here in Philadelphia there are challenges. They exist all over the United



The veteran Snuka remains one of wrestling's finest aerialists, even after 24 years in the ring. He's considering taking his aerial talents to Russia and Jordan.

States and all over the world. I believe it is my place to face them. Some people want to say I am doing too much. Some friends tell me to slow down. I ask them "Why?" As long as I have the strength and health to compete, why should I avoid these challenges?

These youngsters in the ECW will not let me rest. DeBeers will not let me rest. If I slow down, I can do nothing.

Q: It sounds as though you'll be a force in this sport for at least another 10 years.

A: Make that 20, brother. I'm not going anywhere. □

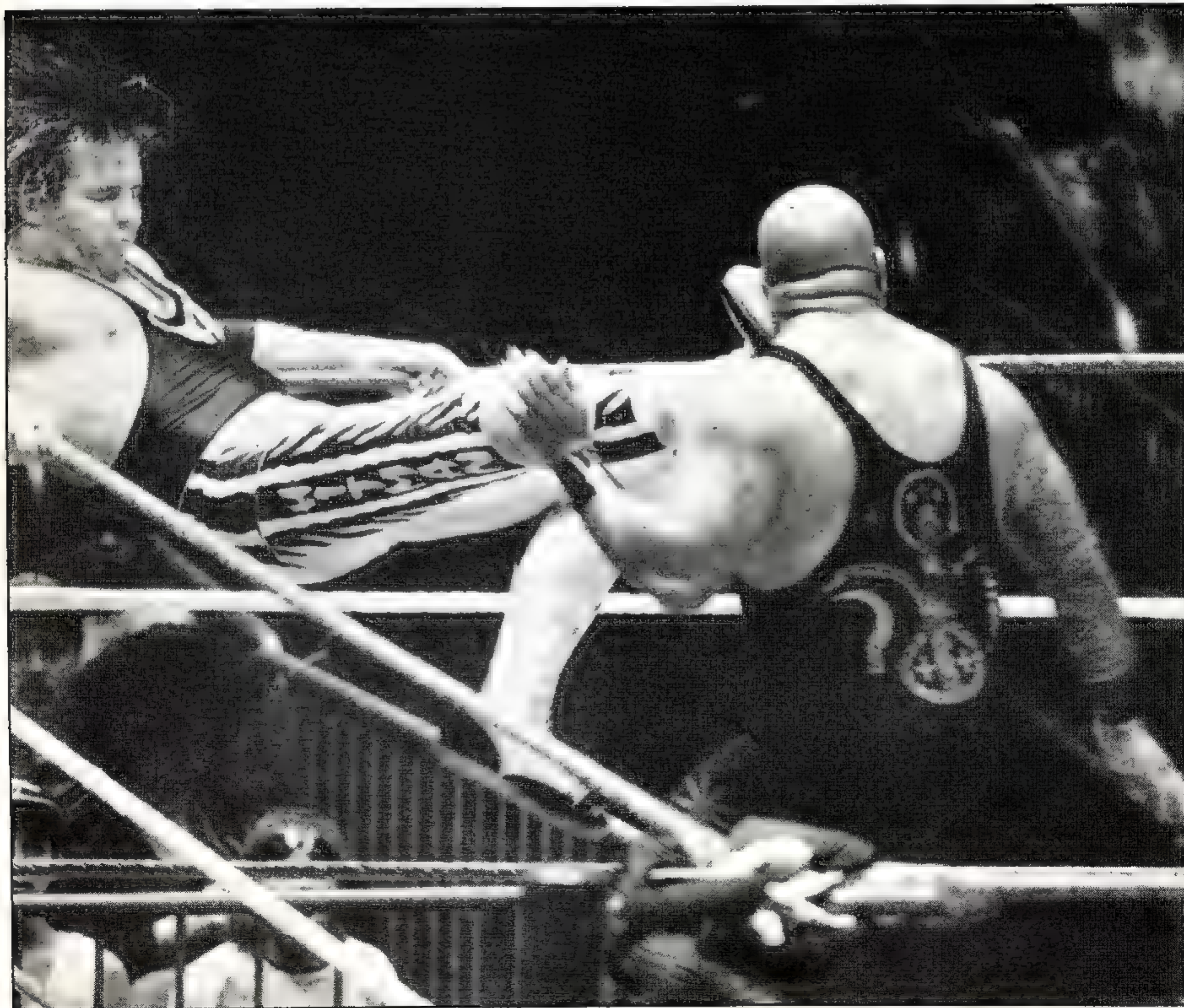
RAY

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES



BRET HART

Each month
THE WRESTLER'S panel of experts
will offer their candid opinions of one
of wrestling's stars. Whether an up-and-coming
youngster or an established superstar in his own right,
our panel will always be frank and honest without fear of reprisal



Bret Hart (kicking Papa Shango) is one of the WWF's most talented and versatile wrestlers. The "Hitman" recently won the "King Of The Ring" tournament, and many think he will eventually regain the WWF World title.



CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"Man, I almost had a heart attack. I ordered 'King Of The Ring' on pay-per-view and settled back for a relaxing night of wrestling. By the end of the night, I'll tell you, brother, the Captain was out of breath. I've never seen a man wrestle three matches like that in one night. What skills, what endurance! The man is a complete wrestler. He can do it all. Right now I don't think there's any stopping him from becoming one of the all-time greats."

Capt. Lou Albano, long known as "The Guiding Light," has guided 13 tag teams to an unprecedented 16 WWF World tag team titles.



KILLER KOWALSKI

"When I study the eyes of Bret Hart, I see a champion waiting to happen. The man has more than proven he's a step above most everyone else. But I can tell he has a chip on his shoulder. It stems from his days as a rulebreaker. That's when he learned the killer instinct. He's got enough talent that he can afford to cater to the pandering fans. But he can't get too cocky if he's going after Jerry Lawler. That guy will teach anyone a lesson."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rulebreakers in the sport's history, runs a wrestling school in Reading, Massachusetts.



DORY FUNK JR.

"Seeing a near-perfect scientific wrestler is a thing of beauty, if you ask me. Bret Hart is just that. He can match scientific skills with anyone. He's not always a gentleman, though. He proved that by not backing down after Curt Hennig mouthed off at him at 'King Of The Ring.' Then he went out and knocked off Hennig. You can have all the scientific talent in the world, but if you're unwilling to knock somebody's block off, you'll never be a superstar."

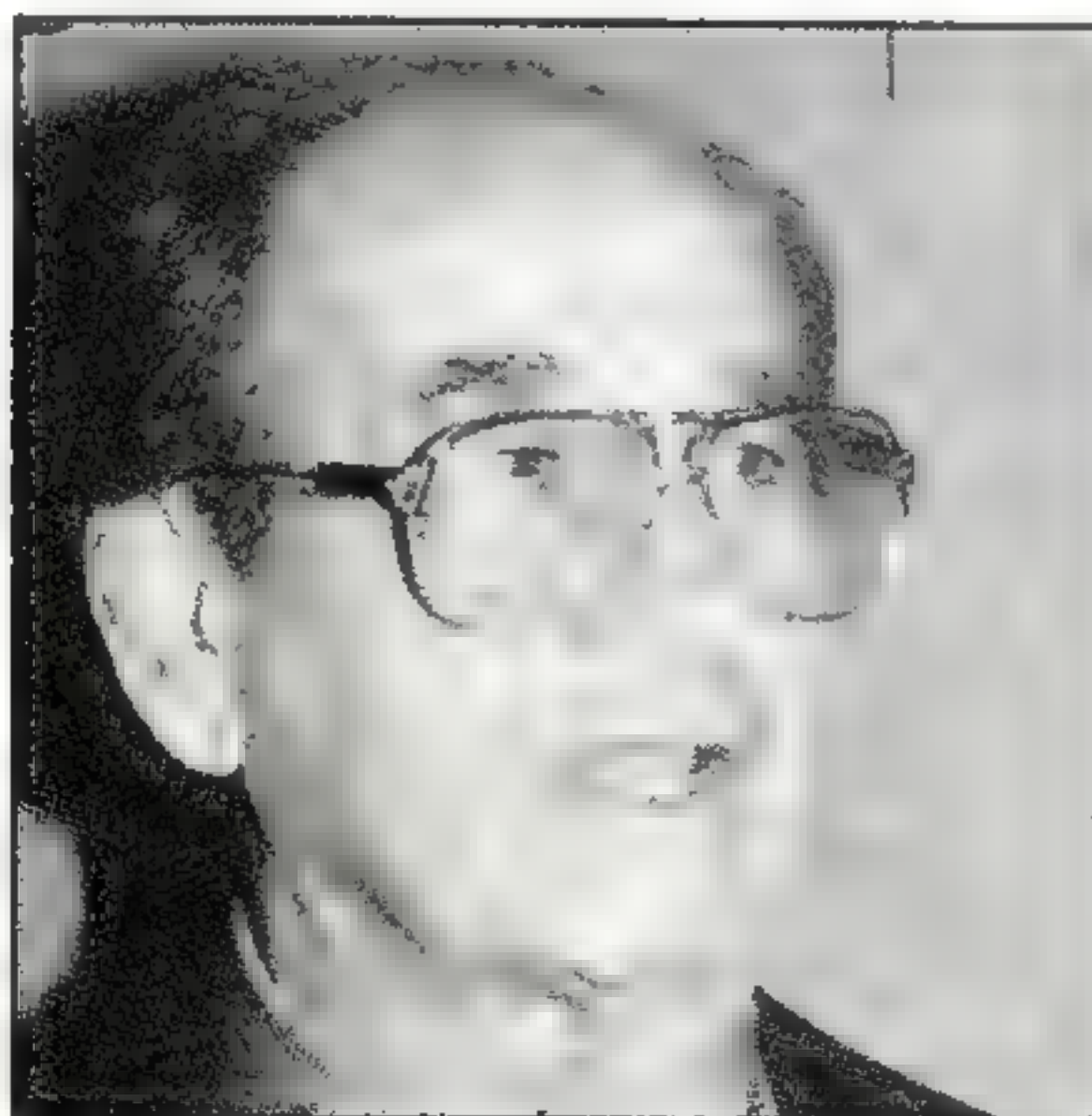
Dory Funk Jr. held the NWA World championship from 1969 to 1973. He still wrestles from time to time.



NICK BOCKWINKEL

"I'm probably one of the few people who isn't quite ready to jump on the Bret Hart bandwagon. I agree his career is peaking, but I see a problem with his career path. He never rightfully lost the WWF belt to Yokozuna. He should have demanded a title shot right after WrestleMania. He didn't. Now he's going after Jerry Lawler. Jerry is an all-time great, but all Hart can get from him is revenge. He should be after world titles at this point."

Nick Bockwinkel, a four-time AWA champion, was one of history's most complete wrestlers. He's now a TV commentator for several independent organizations.



LOU THESZ

"In any sport, it's critical to learn the fundamentals before getting too fancy. From the outset, Bret was fundamentally sound. His father, Stu, taught him well, and he soon became so good at the basics that he expanded his repertoire. He went from above average to something special pretty darn quick. His 'sharpshooter' is one of the nastiest submission holds in wrestling. Bret just seems to get better with each bout. I see that trend continuing."

Lou Thesz held the NWA World title six times during his fabulous 50-year career. Many consider him the greatest all-around wrestler in history.



GORDON SOLIE

"I'm not the first, and I won't be the last to say the Bret Hart of today reminds me of Ric Flair in his prime. Both have unbelievable endurance and will match pure scientific skill with anyone. Hart can be as ornery as Flair when the situation warrants it. I'd warn Bret's fans to temper their enthusiasm. With the parity in wrestling today, I don't see anyone, including Hart, dominating like Flair did in the 1980s. The nightly competition is too tough."

Gordon Solie, often called "The Walter Cronkite Of Professional Wrestling," has been an expert analyst of the sport since 1959. He now occasionally broadcasts for WCW.

Tracey Smothers vs. Tony Anthony:

A VERY UNCIVIL WAR

By Dave
Rosenbaum

*Though **Civil War***

happened over 125 years ago?

*In SMW, **Smothers and Anthony** are*

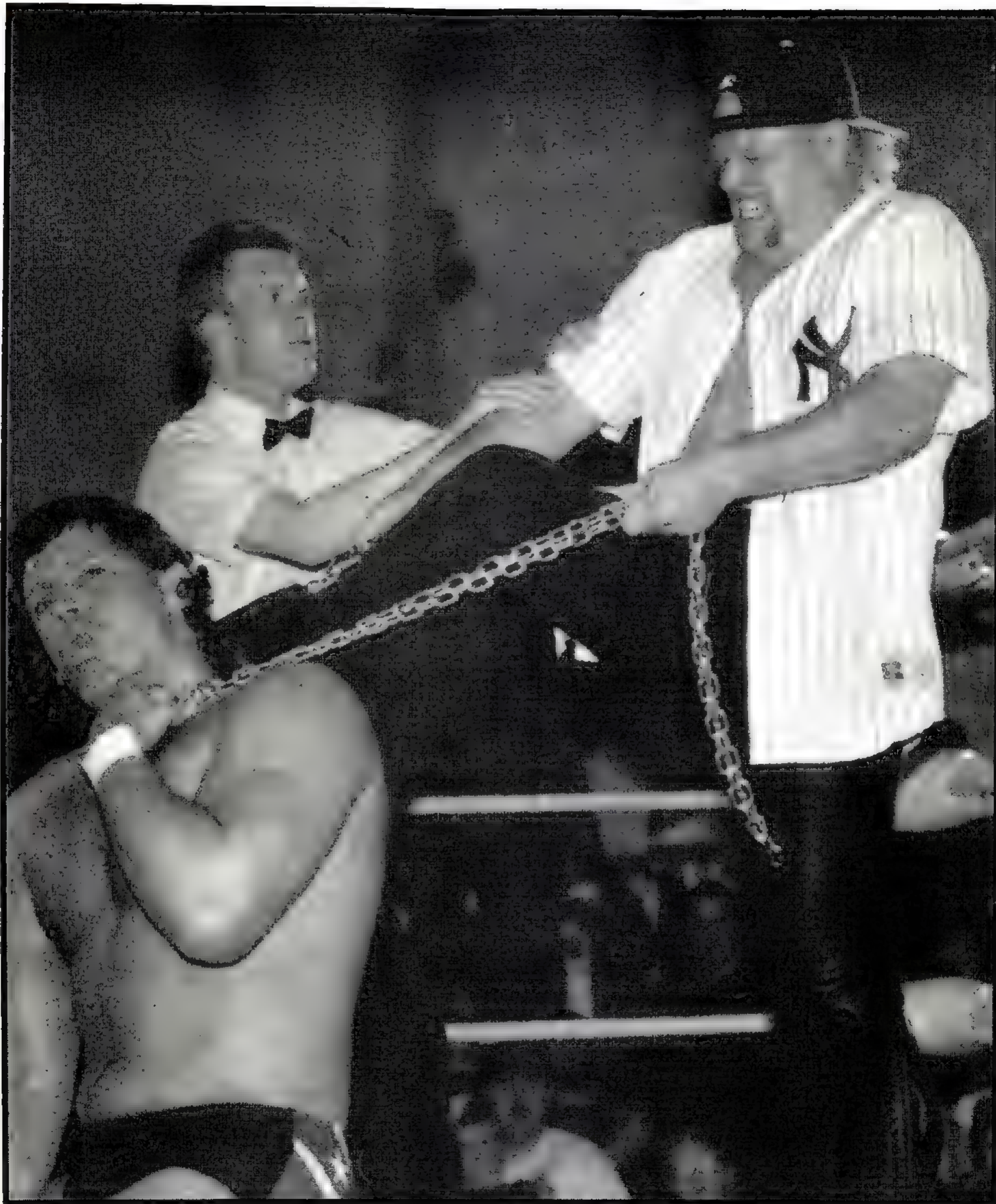
waging an unorthodox version

of the conflict. And frankly,

dear readers, we give a damn!

THE WAR BETWEEN The States pitted the North against the South in a battle that split America. More than a century and a quarter after the last shot was fired, it has caused cultural and philosophical differences between those living above or below the Mason-Dixon line.

It was a battle over a way of life and over states' rights. The Southern states not only wanted to keep slavery, but to protect their rights to decide whether it should be outlawed. The Northern states thought slavery immoral and illegal, and considered some decisions best left to the federal government.



Tracey Smothers and the Southern wrestling fans are gagging on the recent actions of "Dirty White Boy" Tony Anthony.

Let's hope the U.S. never has another Civil War, another split of North vs. South or East vs. West.

Unfortunately, "Dirty White Boy" Tony Anthony doesn't share our hopes. He's still living in the 19th century, when North vs. South was the era's most divisive issue. In an attempt to outrage Smoky

War, it's the South vs. the South Parading Around As The North. Not surprisingly, the South is winning, but in a way, everyone's losing.

Back on May 15, the Smoky Mountain heavyweight belt was declared held up, due to the most confusing thing you'll ever see. Smothers, the champion, wrestled

given a white flag, and the match would end when the second wanted to quit for his man.

During the match, Horner and Wright brawled outside the ring. Horner knocked Wright to the ground and choked him with the flagpole. The referee thought he saw Horner waving the flag and awarded the match to "Dirty White Boy." But the fans told the referee what happened and then-SMW Commissioner Bob Armstrong ordered the belt held up.

That's where the title situation stalled for nearly a month. Smothers defeated Anthony in a non-title chain match—some observers called one of the most brutal ever seen. He also beat Anthony decisively several other times, and many suggested SMW give him back his title.

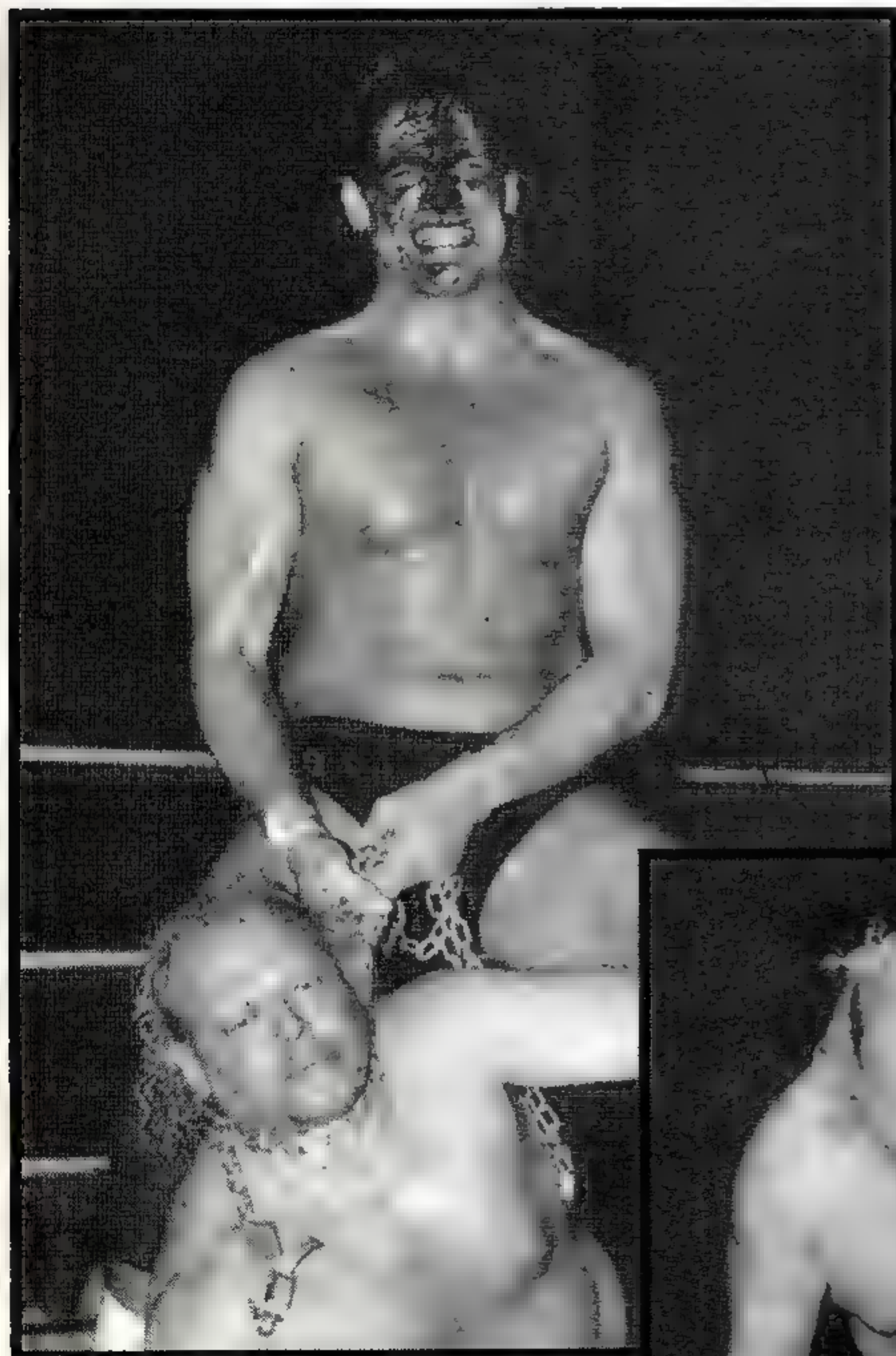
Smothers finally regained the belt on June 11 in Knoxville, Tennessee. Anthony used a chain to knock out his foe and cover him for at least a

six-count, but referee Mark Curtis had also been knocked out. When Anthony tried to revive Curtis, Smothers came to his senses, took a chain out of his trunks, used it on Anthony, and covered him for the pin.

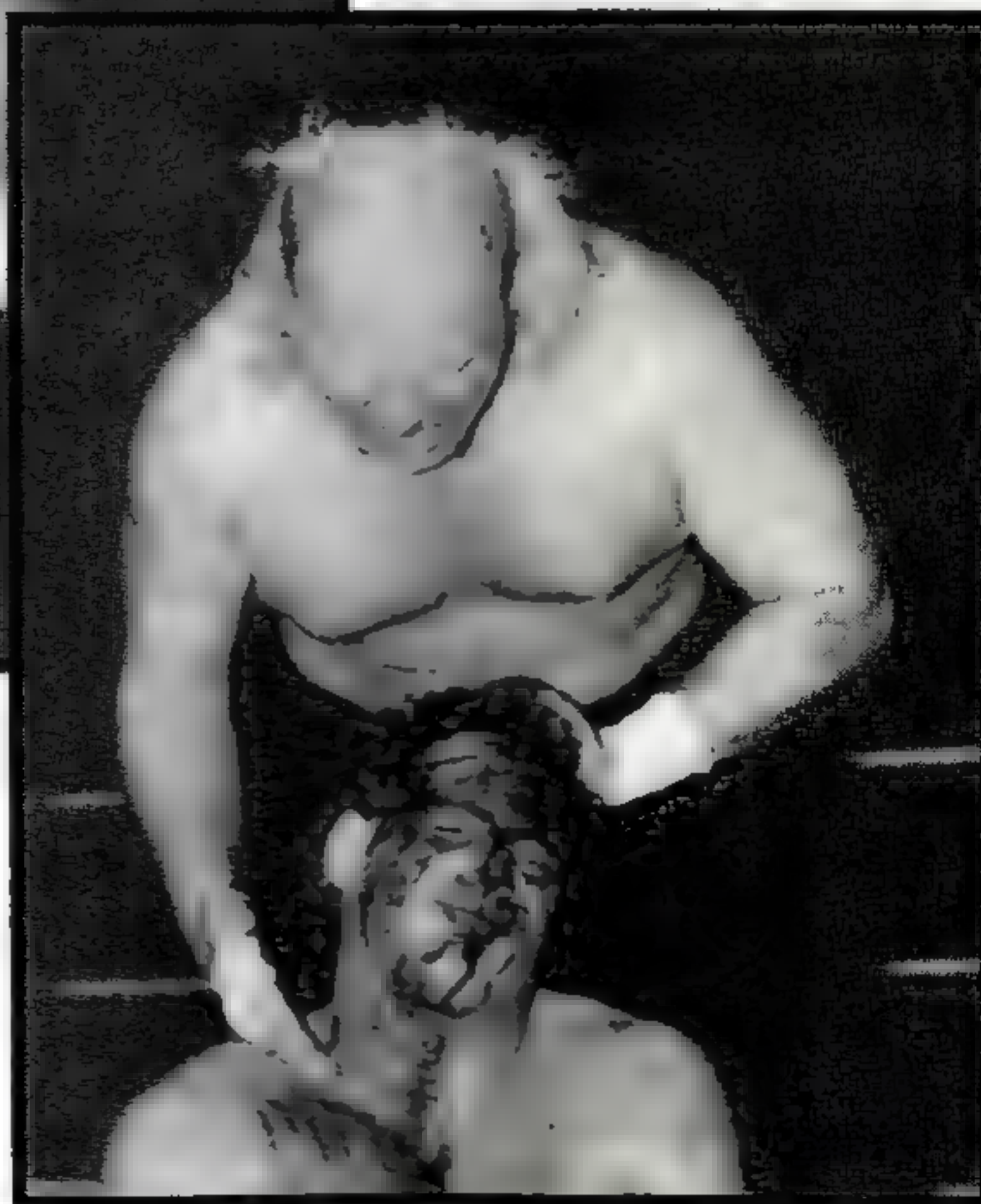
"The way it happened made it even sweeter," Smothers said. "Anthony, that idiot, basically brought on his doom. It's the kind of thing that will always destroy somebody like Anthony. The problem with him is that he's too stupid for his own good. Heck, if I was a Northerner, I'd be embar-

rassed to have that clown associating with me."

The Smothers-Anthony feud simmered early in the year before finally boiling over in March. Anthony



Anthony pulls back the hair of Smothers to examine his surgical work (below), making the mistake of giving his opponent a chance to catch his breath. Despite his blood loss, Smothers mounts a comeback (left).



Mountain Wrestling fans, wrestlers, and promoters, Anthony has declared war on the South.

Just one problem: He's from the South, a native of Bucksnort, Tennessee, although he's now trying to pass himself off as someone from New York City. It's hard to tell whether Anthony's ever even crossed the Mason-Dixon line.

And another problem: His archrival, Tracey Smothers, is also from the South. Atlanta, in fact.

So in Smoky Mountain's Civil

Anthony in a "coward waves the flag" match in Johnson City, Tennessee. Both of the wrestlers' seconds—Don Wright for Anthony, Tim Horner for Smothers—were

burned Smothers' Confederate flag and challenged him to the first Tennessee chain match since the 1970s.

The match was one of the bloodiest in years, and cost Anthony dearly. Smothers won his SMW title by touching all four corners of the ring.

Then, in May, Anthony painted a yellow streak down Smothers' back after the champ had finished a match.

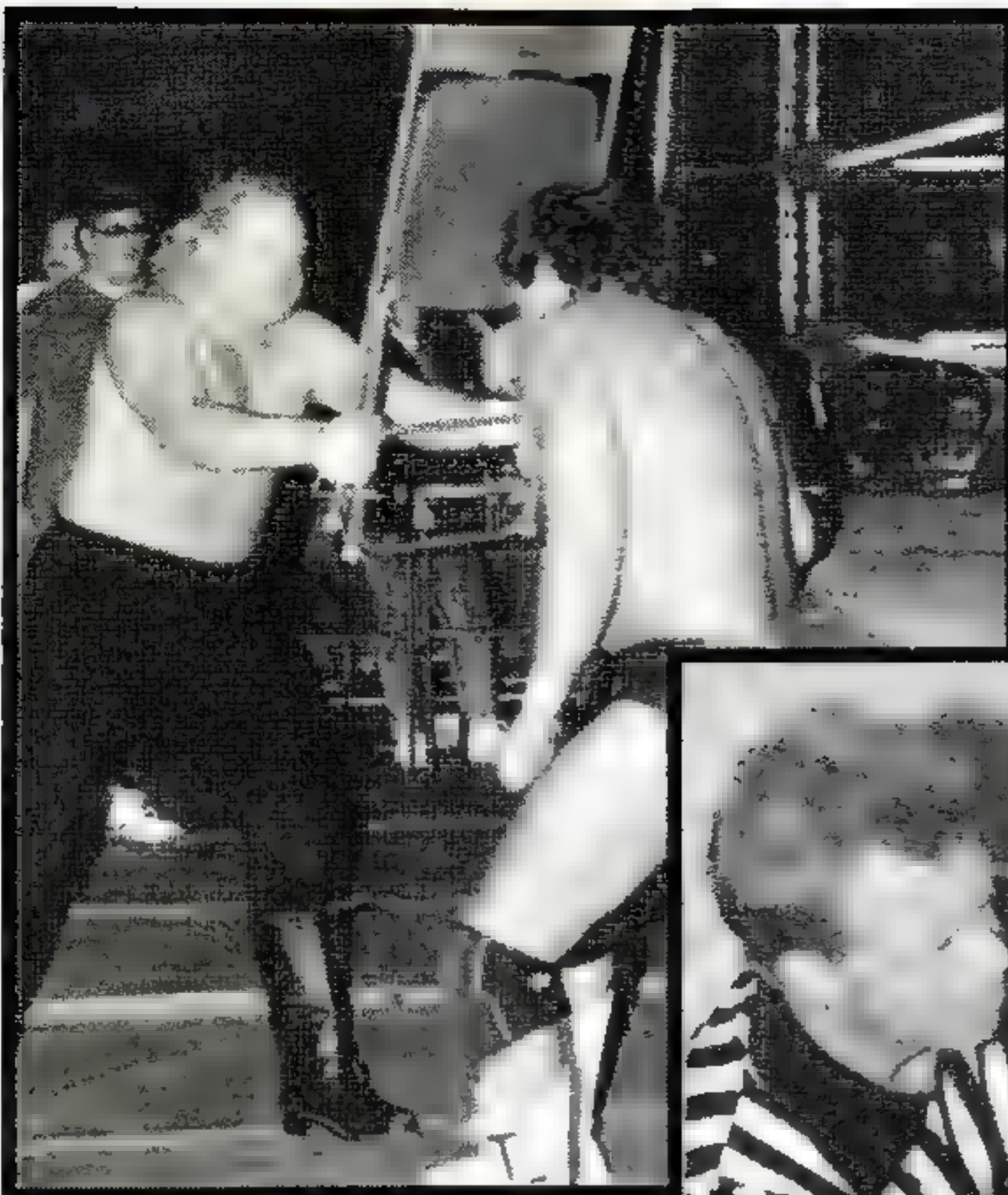
"It was the most immature thing I've ever seen somebody do," Smothers said. "Just when you think Anthony can't sink any lower, he takes this feud to a new level."

"That's right," Anthony retorted. "And Smothers hasn't seen half of the things I've got up my sleeve."

There's enough blame to go around. Smothers, despite his goody-two-shoes image in this feud, has resorted to name-calling and occasional rulebreaking. He's shown his willingness to get down in the gutter and wrestle dirty.

"I don't like the way Smothers is coming off as the good guy in all this," said Ron Wright, Anthony's manager. "Basically, my man is defending the honor of his hometown, the North, and Smothers is trying to defend the South, which doesn't deserve defending. If this federation was based in New York or Boston, the fans would be rooting for us."

Don't believe it. Many Northern wrestling fans are nothing but amused by the Smothers-Anthony feud, much like many of us are amused when wrestlers from the former



Anthony shows Smothers a ringside seat (above). The weary, blood-soaked Smoky Mountain champion recovered, however, and used some dirty tactics of his own in choking the "Dirty White Boy" with a chain (below). Their intense feud is rooted in Civil War times, and Smothers often requires medical attention after wrestling his arch-rival (right).



Soviet Union try to start feuds with Americans. The Cold War and the Civil War are old news.

"I agree," Smothers said. "But in my mind, this isn't about North vs. South. It's about him insulting Southern fans and our way of life. Heck, he's a Southerner, and that's what makes it worse. This is really

about decent Southern people vs. a Southern criminal."

Smothers has vowed to run "Dirty White Boy" out of SMW. Anthony recently retorted, "Before long, New York City will be the capital of Tennessee," perhaps not realizing it isn't even the capital of New York State.

This civil war is marked by uncivil behavior. Appreciate the Anthony-Smothers feud for what it is, a blood feud between two enemies who just won't quit. □

DON'T EVER SAY

"PRELIM BUM"

TO

"MR. PERFECT"

You'll Never Believe Why!

Curt Hennig is blessed with extraordinary skill that allows him to ease up against lesser opponents. So why doesn't he? The training he received from his father provides the answer

By Chris Bernucca

CURT HENNIG WAS pacing back and forth, walking off nervous energy. He looked like the expectant father from another era, where husbands didn't join their wives in the delivery room. You almost expected him to light a cigarette.

He wasn't in the waiting room of a hospital, though, but in the locker room of the Metro Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia, preparing for a singles match. The mannerisms of "Mr. Perfect" indicated the night's opponent was not one to be taken lightly. A quick check of the program revealed the dreaded foe for this TV match to be...

Burt Centeno?

"That's just Curt," said Dusty Wolfe, who has wrestled Hennig on occasion. "He doesn't take anyone lightly. It doesn't matter if it's a title match or a tuneup. Curt wrestles everybody the same way—all out."

Hennig easily handled Centeno that evening, returning to the locker room with a smile making one think he'd just won the WWF Intercontinental belt. Two nights later in Kitchener, Ontario, he defeated I-C champion Shawn Michaels with the same preparation.

How does Hennig find the ability to similarly focus on both the elites and also-rans of the WWF? He shrugged and sidestepped the question, as if it were a lumbering oppo-

nent bouncing off the ropes. But we still got the answer, from no less a source than the man in the sport who may be closest to him.

"I taught my son that you can never let up in this sport," said Larry "The Ax" Hennig, Curt's father and guru. "There's no such thing as an easy match. There's no time for showboating or posing or any of that other funny stuff. He's in the ring to wrestle, not to flex muscles or talk with the fans in the ringside seats."

The elder Hennig, part of four AWA tag team champions in the 1960s (the last three with Harley Race), is from wrestling's old school. Now retired, he still enjoys the head-to-head competition, but has little patience for all the glamour and glitz in the sport today.

"Guys are more concerned with how they look than they are with winning and losing," he said. "This is wrestling, not a fashion show. There's supposed to be grunts and groans and bumps and bruises."

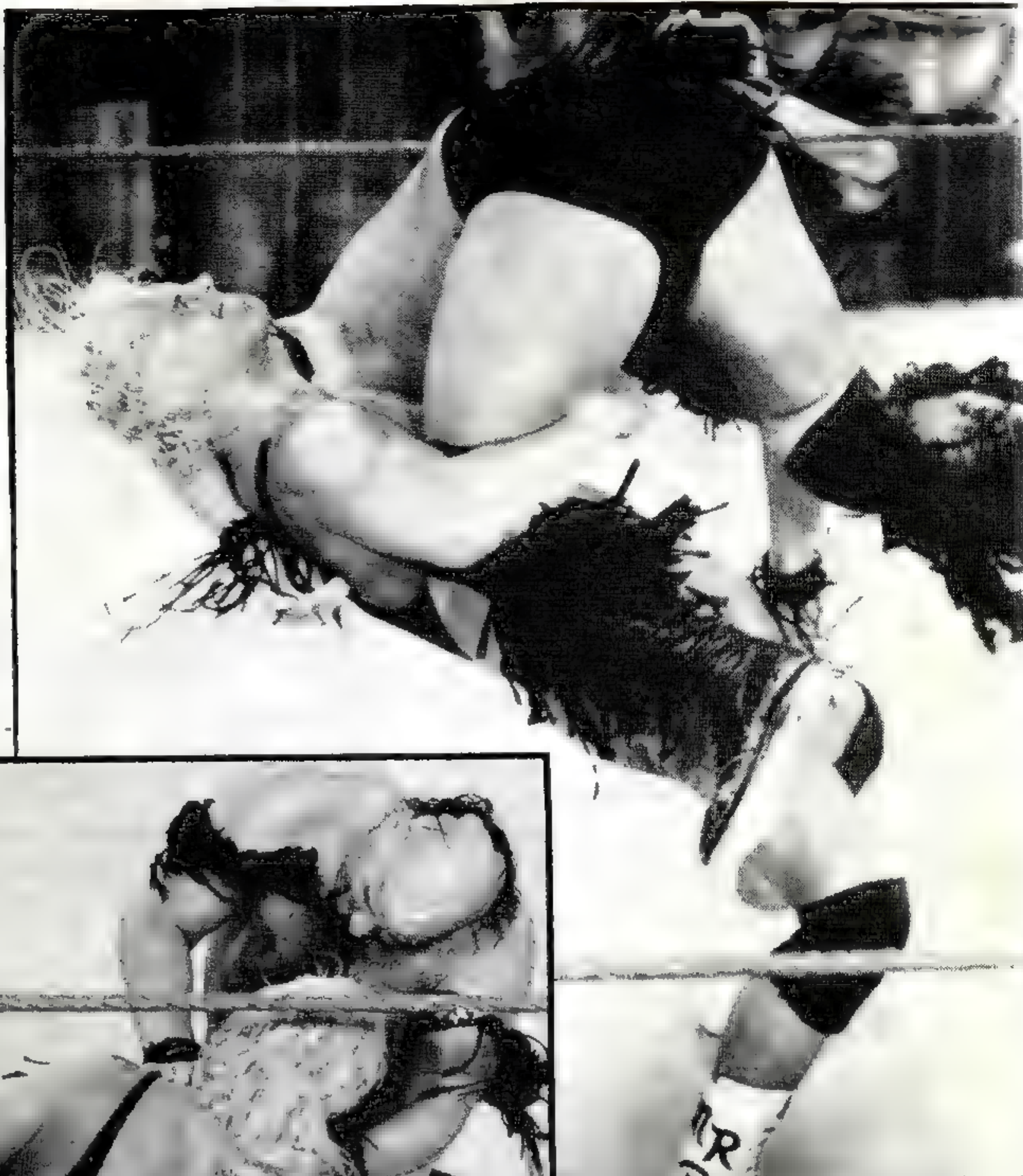
When he first began training his son for the rigors of the squared circle, Hennig also taught his son three important rules regarding his ring behavior:

1. Never give less than 100 percent in a match, regardless of the level of competition.

2. Never do anything in the ring that would embarrass or degrade your opponent.

3. Try to learn something from every match.

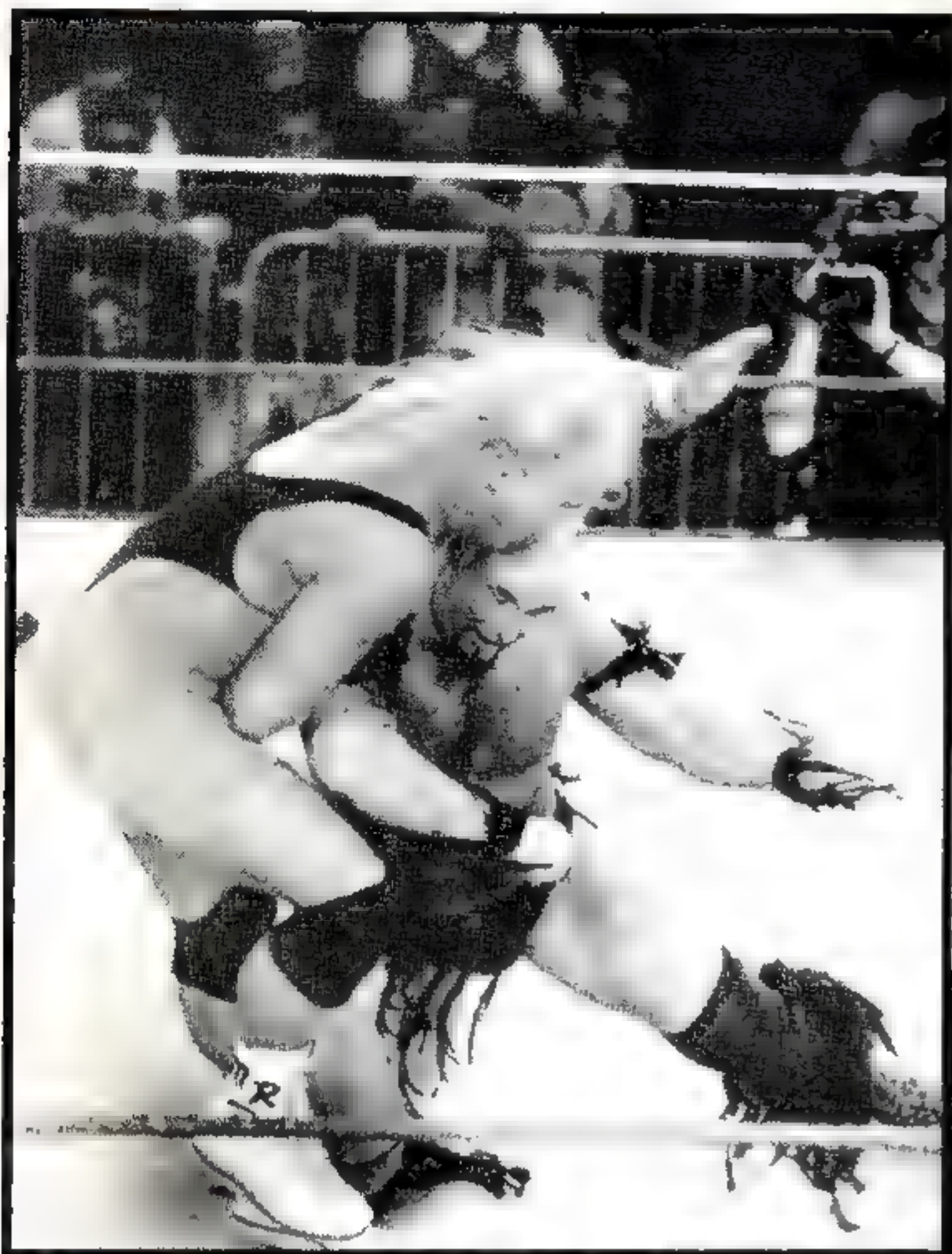
With a nickname like "Mr. Perfect," the younger Hennig has found it difficult to remove all the swagger from his personality. However, he is still able to conduct himself with more professionalism than



Curt Hennig knows the potential dangers that exists when taking on a man as aggressive as Damien Dimento (left). That's why he shows no less intensity against this caliber opponent (above) than he does a championship contender.

95 percent of his colleagues in the WWF.

"I called him the day after Razor Ramon lost to The Kid," said the elder Hennig. "I reminded him about what can happen when you take an opponent lightly. Neither of us was really surprised, because we both know Ramon has a tendency to ease up when he thinks he has



Hennig is able to protect his midsection from Dimento's elbow (above). Had he not prepared himself mentally coming in to the bout, he could have been wide open for such a quick offensive thrust. Much of "Mr. Perfect's" wrestling education comes from his father, Larry "The Ax" Hennig (right).

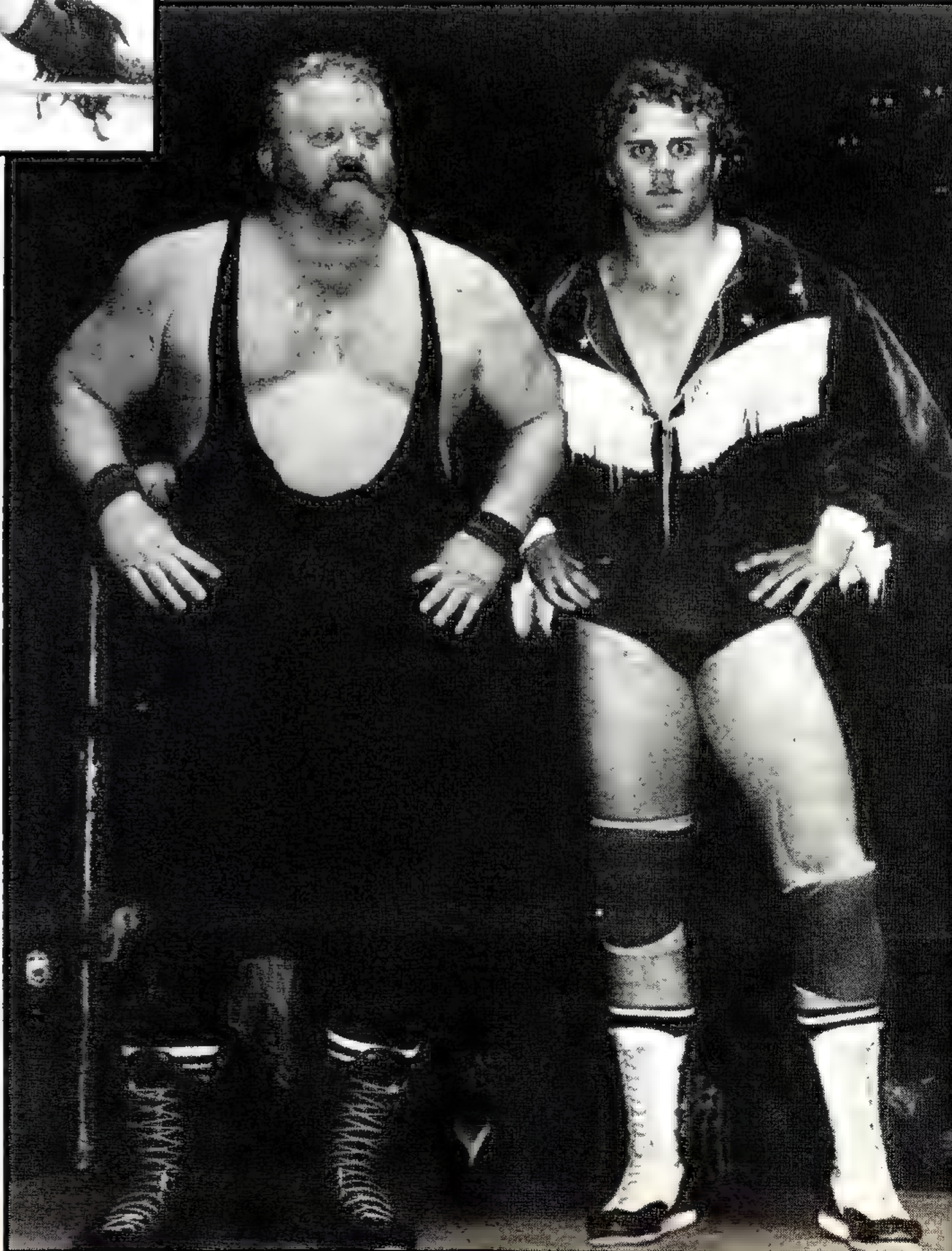
the upper hand. Some guys just don't understand that wrestling is a sport of leverage. If you let up for one instant, your opponent can pin you before you even know it."

But the level of skill required to defeat Shawn Michaels isn't needed to defeat an opponent like Burt Centeno, so why expend the energy?

"It doesn't matter," snapped the elder Hennig. "Just because a guy is wrestling in preliminary matches doesn't mean he's a preliminary wrestler. He may be the next superstar just getting started in the sport. And even if he isn't the next superstar, that's no

reason to disrespect him or embarrass him. He's out there trying to win matches, make money, and put food on his family's table and keep a roof over their head. He's putting his manhood on the line just like you are, and he should be respected for that.

"Besides, what good can come out of showing up an opponent? The only thing that counts is who wins the match, and the quicker you can do that, the easier it is on your body. If you waste the first five minutes of a match trying to show up a lesser opponent, you may have a wounded tiger on your hands. Now you've



expended five minutes of energy and done nothing except provide your opponent with more motivation to win. If you can beat a guy in three minutes, then do it, and do it without calling attention to yourself. Your peers will have a lot more respect for you."

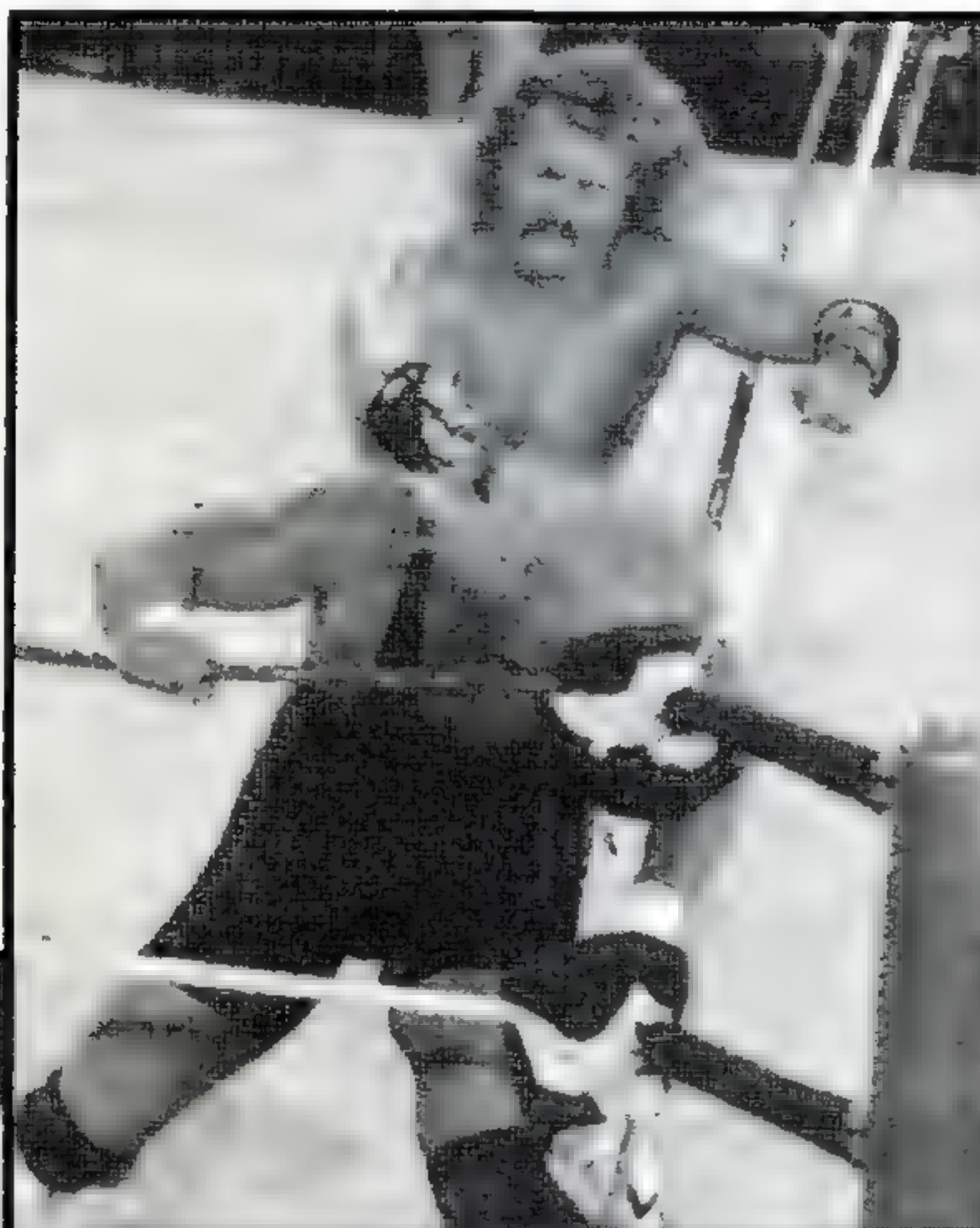
The younger Hennig is one of the sport's most accomplished scientific wrestlers, and his days as a rulebreaker also gave him the opportunity to learn the finer points of brawling. At this stage in his career, could he still be learning from matches against foes like Centeno?

"Absolutely," said Larry proudly. "Look at The Kid and some of the guys who have come over from Japan. They've shown American wrestlers things they've never seen before. There's no such thing as a

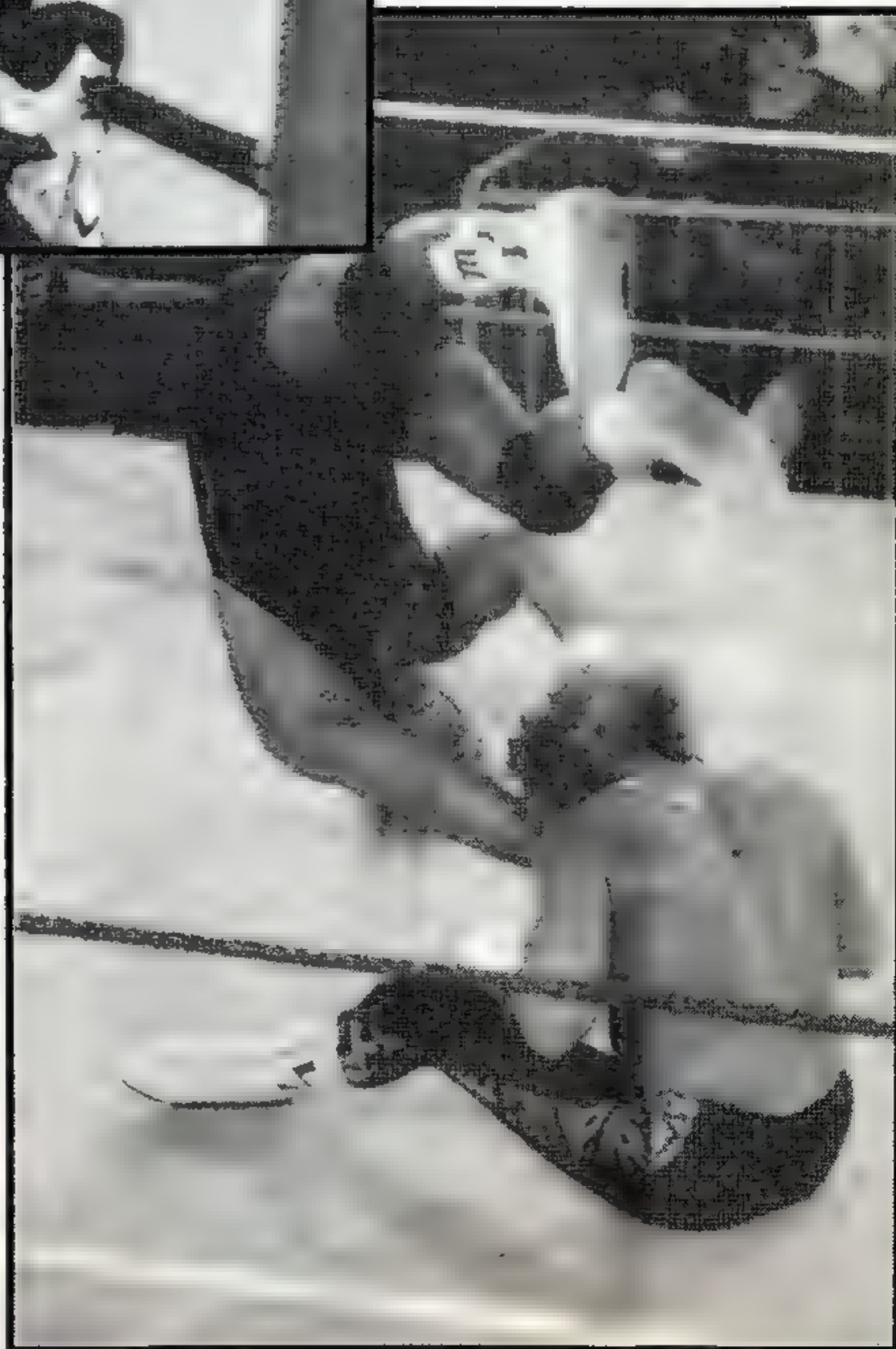
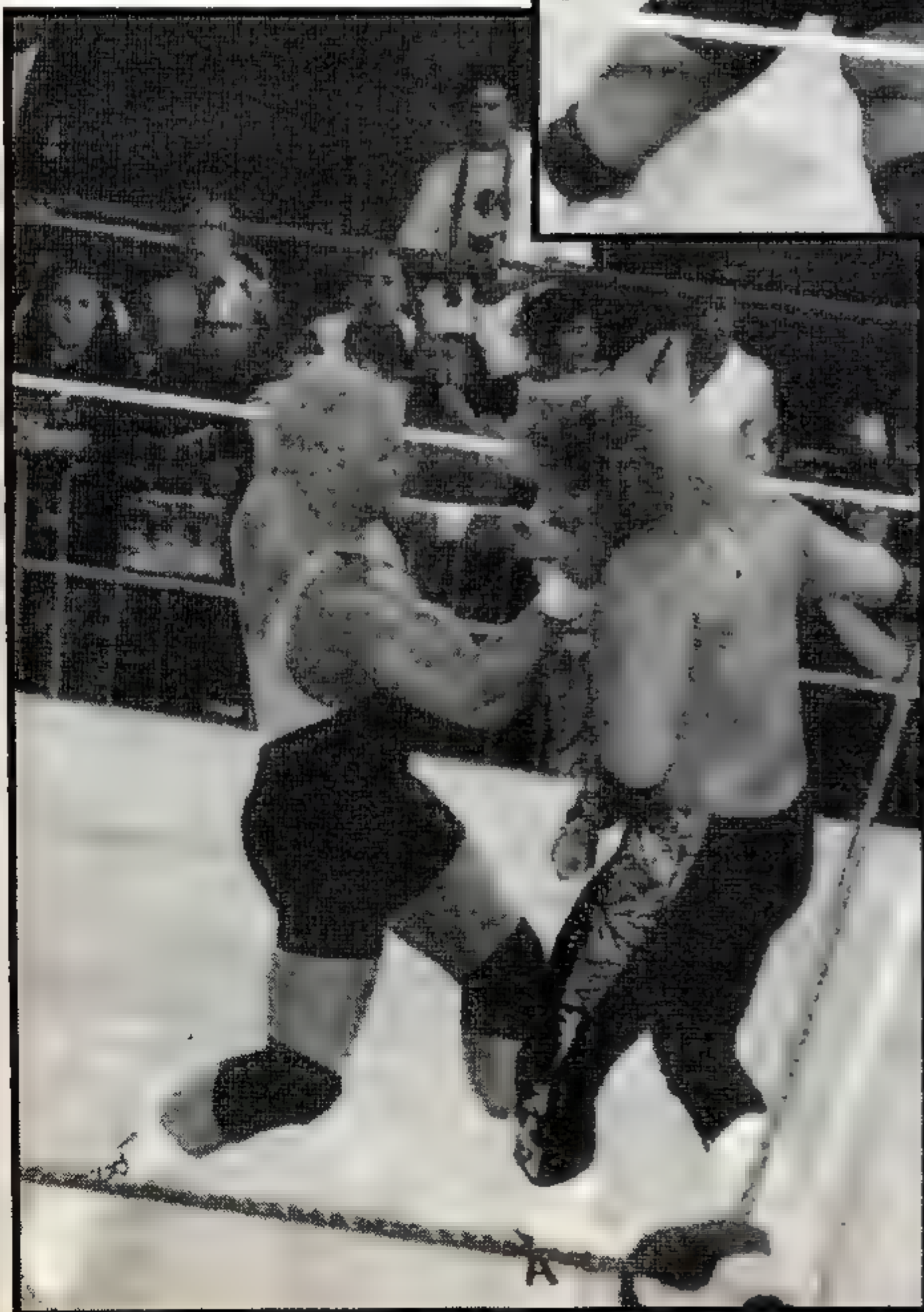
prelim bum.

"Take a guy like Barry Horowitz. He's considered by some people to be just that—a prelim bum. But he's wrestled in Japan many times, so he's more familiar with their style of wrestling than my son. If Curt were to wrestle him, he could definitely pick up something new. Remember, everybody was a prelim bum at one point in their career."

Even "Mr. Perfect." □



Is Hennig learning something from L.A. Gore as his head is pounded against the turnbuckle (left)? The answer is a resounding yes! Hennig stayed in the ring with Gore no more than five minutes, just enough time to weaken his opponent, stun him with a right uppercut (below left), snap his neck (below right), and score the pin.





NO FLAVOR IS BACK

OUR 10-POINT
SYSTEM
MEASURES
HIS CHANCES
OF SUCCESS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Seven-time NWA/WCW and two-time WWF World champion Ric Flair returned to the WCW—his home away from home—on February 21, but didn't make his first ring appearance until June 17 at Clash of the Champions XXIII in Norfolk, Virginia. It was a glorious return, marred by Barry Windham's interference, but memorable mostly for an outstanding performance by Flair and tag team partner Arn Anderson. They seemed headed for victory over WCW World tag team champions Steve Austin and Brian Pillman, until Windham interfered during the second fall of their best-of-three falls match.

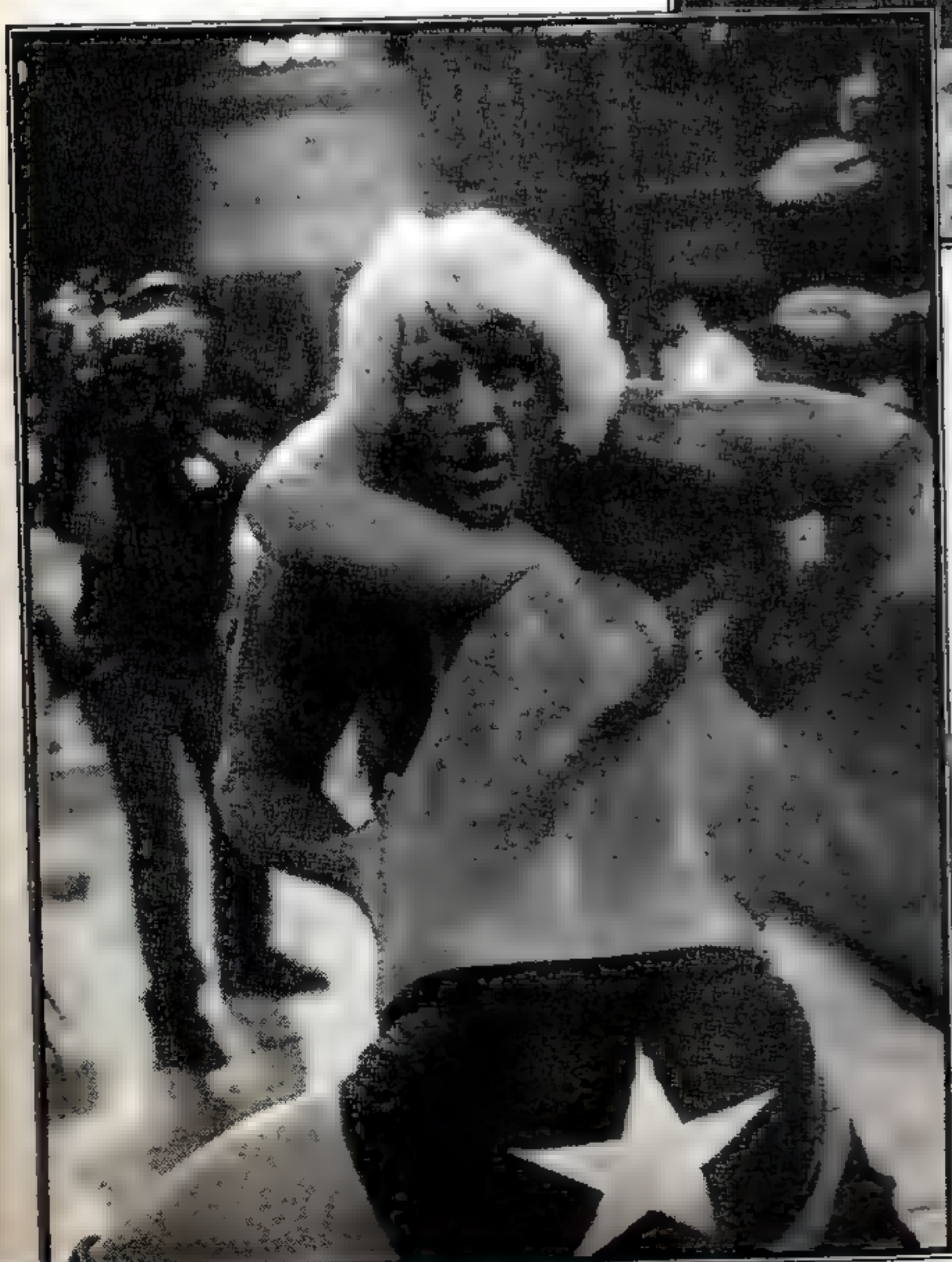
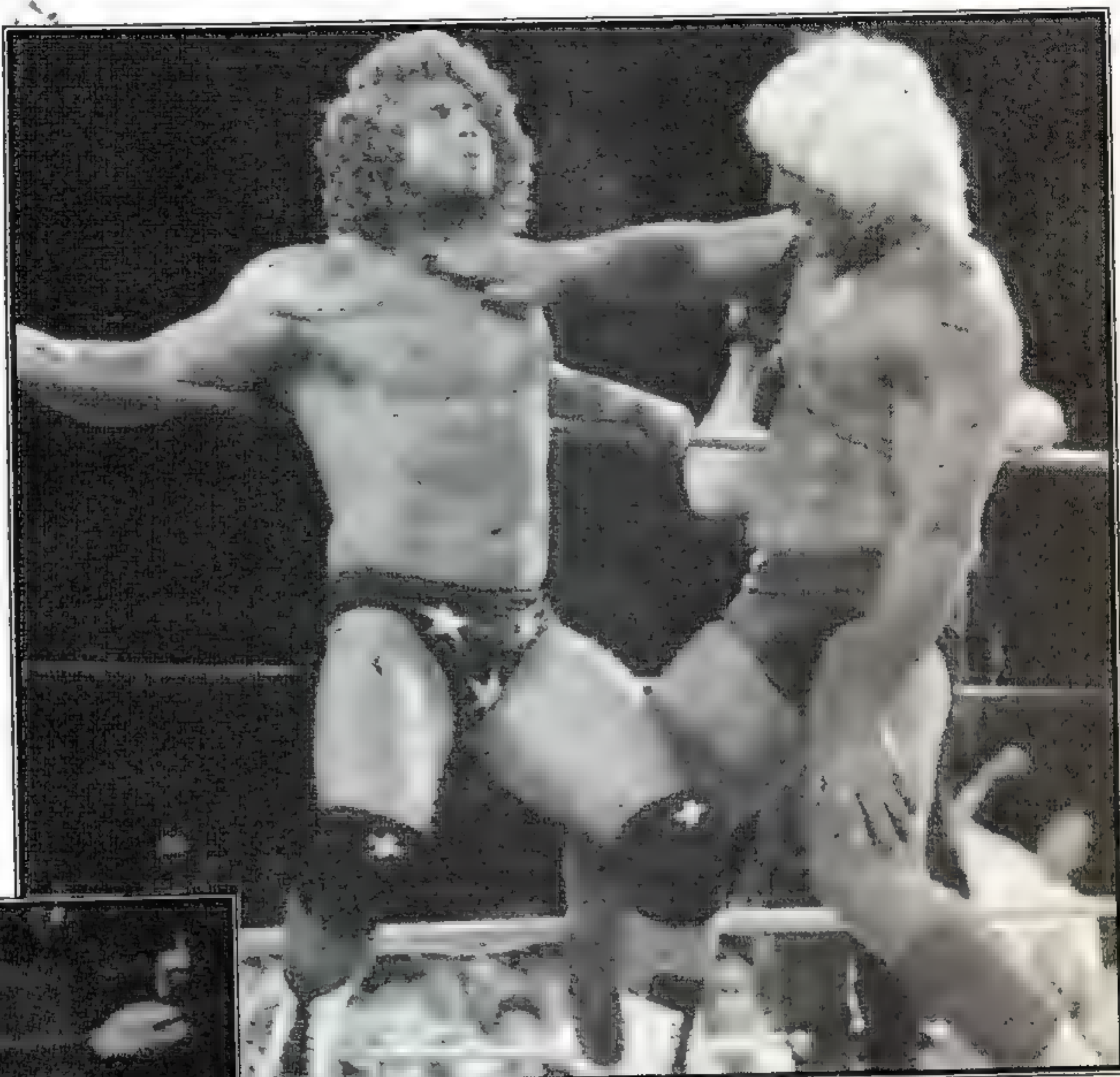
Although Flair and Anderson seem intent on winning the tag belts, the "Nature Boy" has made no secret of his desire to win the WCW World title for an eighth time. He has many things on his side, including the new and reunited Four Horsemen and, for a change, the fans' support.

But can he make it back to the top in the twilight of his career? We measured Flair's chances by grading him in 10 important categories ... pass or fail.

OFFENSE: Flair displayed all of the old offensive skills at Clash of the Champions. That's the problem. His figure-four leglock was once the most effective finishing maneuver in wrestling, but it was ineffective at the Clash. Flair revolutionized the sport during the 1980s, but

is hesitant—or unable—to start a new revolution. He's just too predictable. *Grade: Fail.*

DEFENSE: Flair's no idiot; he knows his offense has lost much of its effectiveness and his body can no longer take much abuse. So, he's now using his mind, absorbing less



Ric Flair still has the best chopping right hand in the sport, but his moves are getting predictable and easy to counter for smart wrestlers like Brian Pillman (above). Defensively, he is still at the top of his game, fighting off Steve Austin's attempted bodyslam (left).

punishment by countermoving better than ever before. Check out the tape of Clash XXIII. Until Windham's attack, Flair went virtually unscathed. *Grade: Pass.*

EXPERIENCE: Flair has met and beaten every top wrestler in the world and is prepared for any type of attack. In fact, he has unwittingly invented many of the offenses used by some top wrestlers. If a match comes down to making the right decision, Flair can always be counted on to come through. *Grade: Pass.*

AGE: Although Flair has been wrestling for 19 years—he won't reveal his actual age, although it's

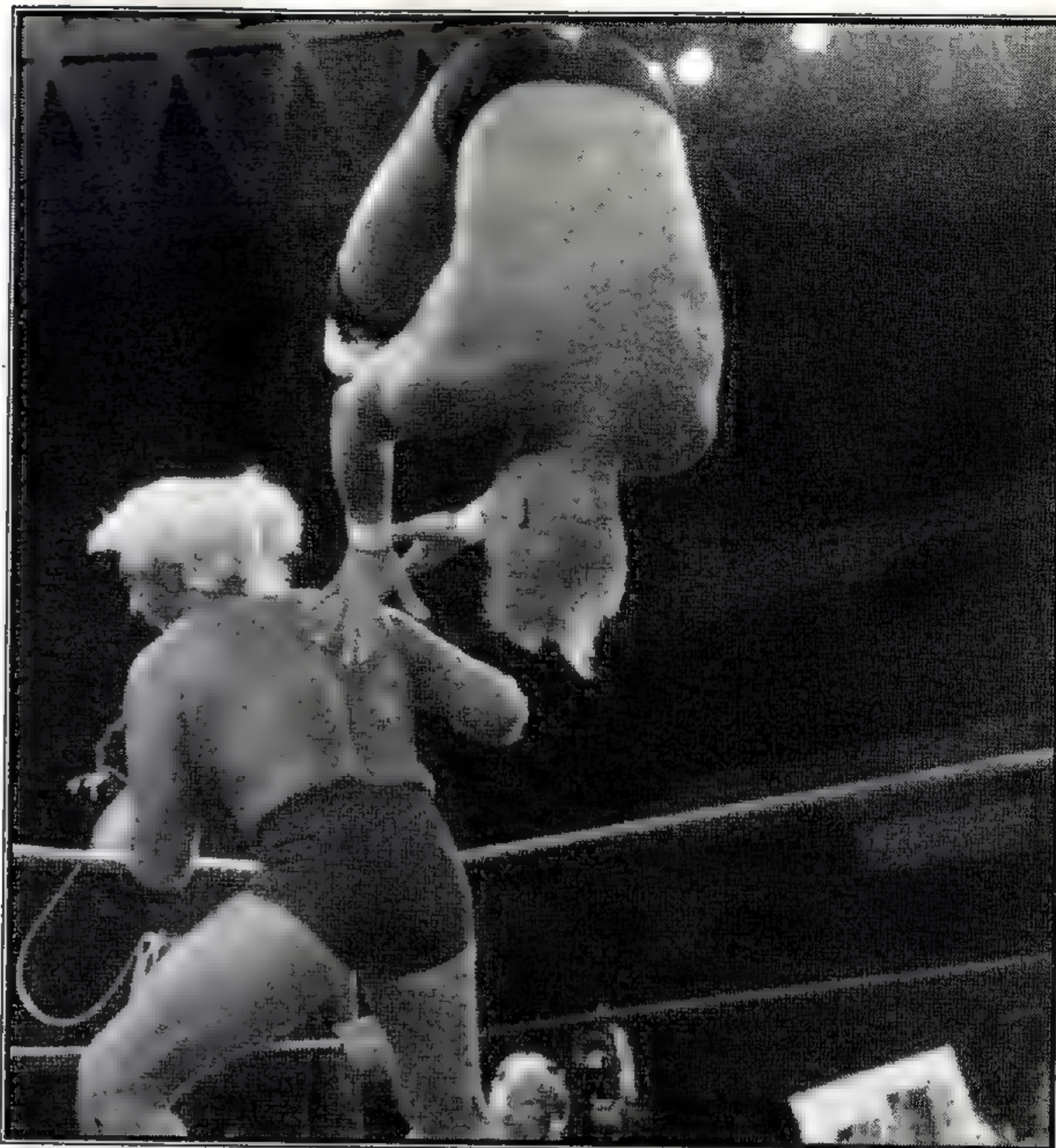
supposedly somewhere in the early-40s—many wrestlers have won titles at an advanced age (Harley Race, Nick Bockwinkel, Dusty Rhodes, Verne Gagne, and even Hulk Hogan). Veterans in other sports such as Nolan Ryan, Jack Nicklaus, and Jimmy Connors have been able to knock off the young guns. Age is no asset, but it's not a major detriment. *Grade: Pass.*

HEALTH: Considering the number of matches Flair's wrestled—estimated at over 6,000—he's in remarkably good shape. But, of course, time has taken its toll on the "Nature Boy." A serious back injury suffered in a 1975 plane crash occasionally limits his mobility. Four years ago, Flair suffered serious back and neck injuries when piledrived by Terry Funk. His recent four-month absence from competition hints that he's still hurting. *Grade: Fail.*

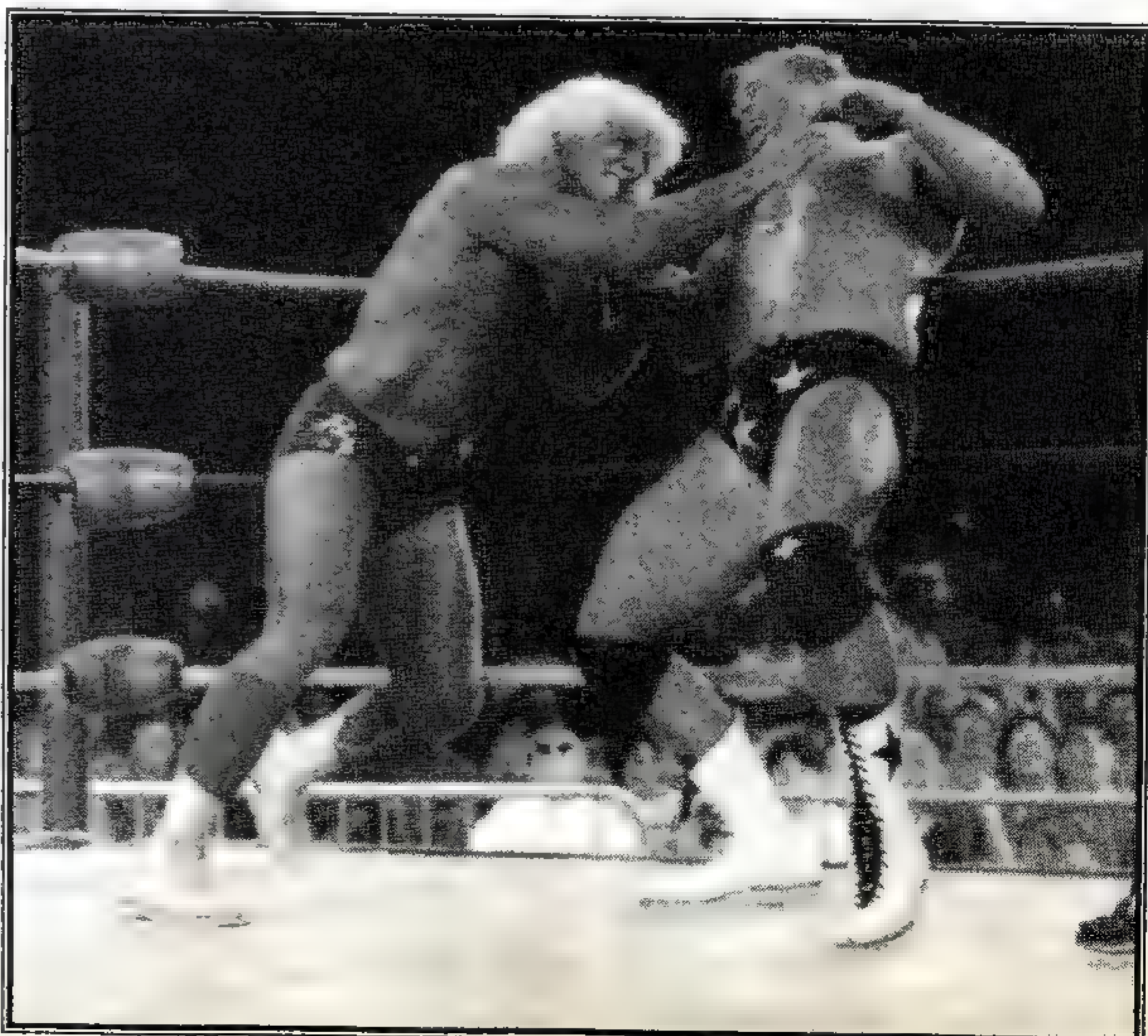
FRIENDS: The Four Horsemen are back. The clique that had much to do with Flair's NWA dominance during the 1980s has been reformed, although not necessarily reformed. Arn, Ole Anderson, and Flair are together again, along with recent addition Paul Roma. There's the problem: Roma's no Tully Blanchard, Barry Windham, nor Sid Vicious. It remains to be seen whether the new Horsemen will put their bodies on the line for Flair's good. *Grade: Fail.*

THE COMPETITION: WCW's top 10 is extremely impressive. World champion Big Van Vader is one of the most awesome titlists ever, and check out the top contenders: Windham, Davey Boy Smith, Sting, Dustin Rhodes, Vicious, Ron Simmons, and Rick Rude. They're all hungry for the title, and Flair is the oldest of the bunch. Is he still better than any of these men? *Grade: Fail.*

DETERMINATION: Let's compare Flair's situation to that of



Austin calls Flair over the hill, but it is "Stunning" Steve who goes over the top (above) and experiences a chokehold (below) at Clash of the Champions XXIII. Flair, who is dealing with the accompanying pressure of seeking a 10th world title, is the equal of such exceptional athletes as Nolan Ryan, Jack Nicklaus, Jimmy Connors, and Robert Parish.



the Chicago Bulls, the three-time NBA champions. They were under tremendous pressure to make it three in a row, and their rallying cry in the finals against Phoenix was "Let's get it over with." Michael Jordan later talked about the relief of winning the title. Is Flair in a similar situation, where the pleasure of going after a 10th world belt is outweighed by the fan and media pressure? If he was so anxious to win the title, why didn't he go right after Vader? In reality, he's done everything he could do. *Grade: Fail.*

MANAGEMENT: For all of his intelligence, Flair has always relied on a manager. In WCW, it was J.J. Dillon. In the WWF, it was Bobby Heenan and Curt Hennig. Now he's on his own, but on the verge of facing wrestlers he's never seen. Flair needs a manager ... but there isn't one in sight. *Grade: Fail.*

INTANGIBLES: The old Flair stamina is still there. No one matches his scientific knowledge. He still can take total control of the ring. And, for a change, the fans are on his side. Despite past indiscretions,

it's difficult to root against Flair, considering his vast accomplishments and contributions to the sport. The "home-mat" advantage does mean something; just ask Jerry Lawler. *Grade: Pass.*

OVERALL SCORE: Flair fails in six categories and passes in only four. Considering WCW's high level of competition, he'll have to come up with something new in order to win his 10th world title. On the other hand, Flair and Arn are still crafty enough to beat The Hollywood Blonds for the tag belts. □

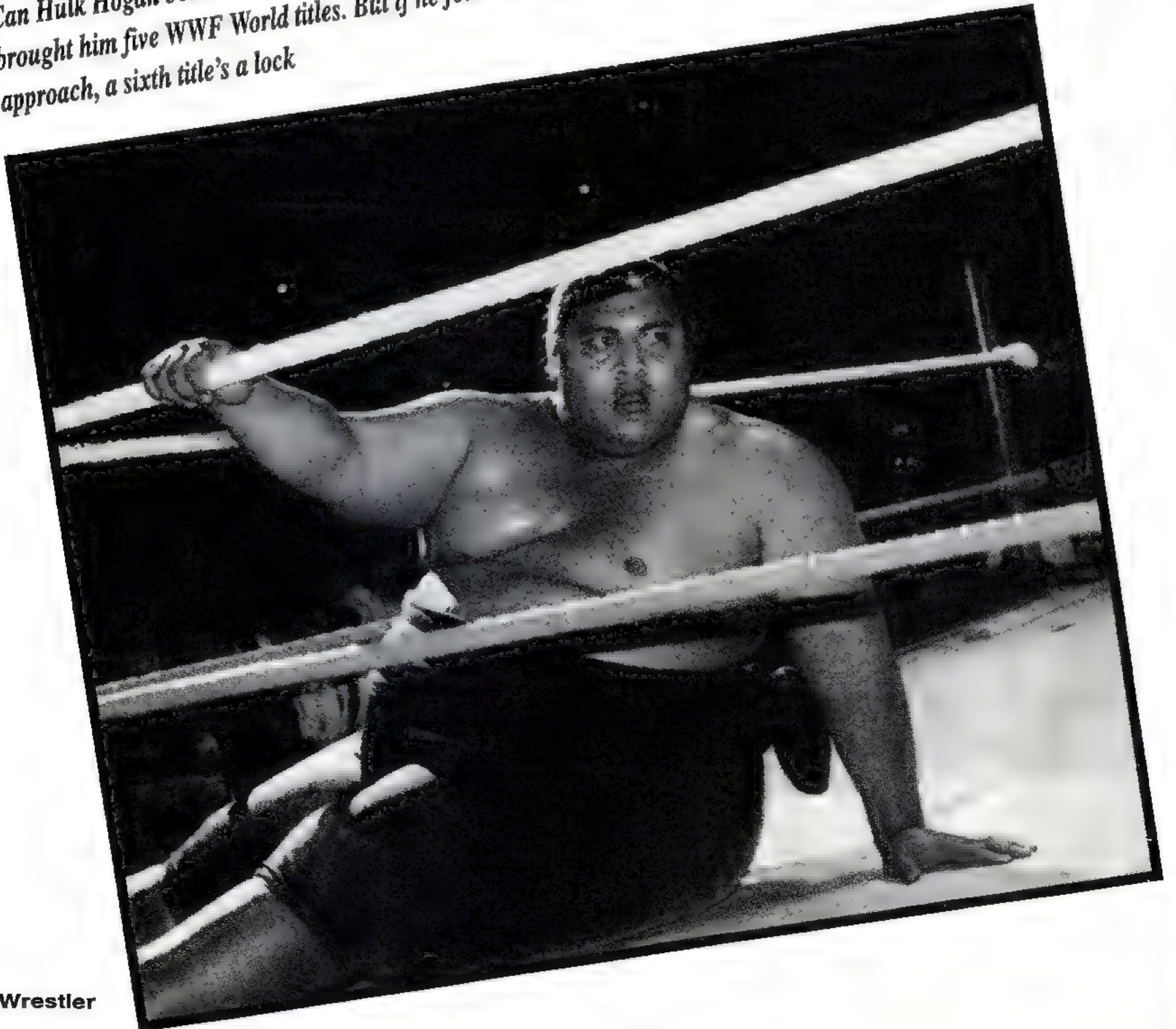


Flair withstands Brian Pillman's assault. Over the years, the "Nature Boy" has relied more on his wrestling smarts than fan support, but he's become a favorite upon his return to WCW.

OUR GIFT TO THE "HULK"

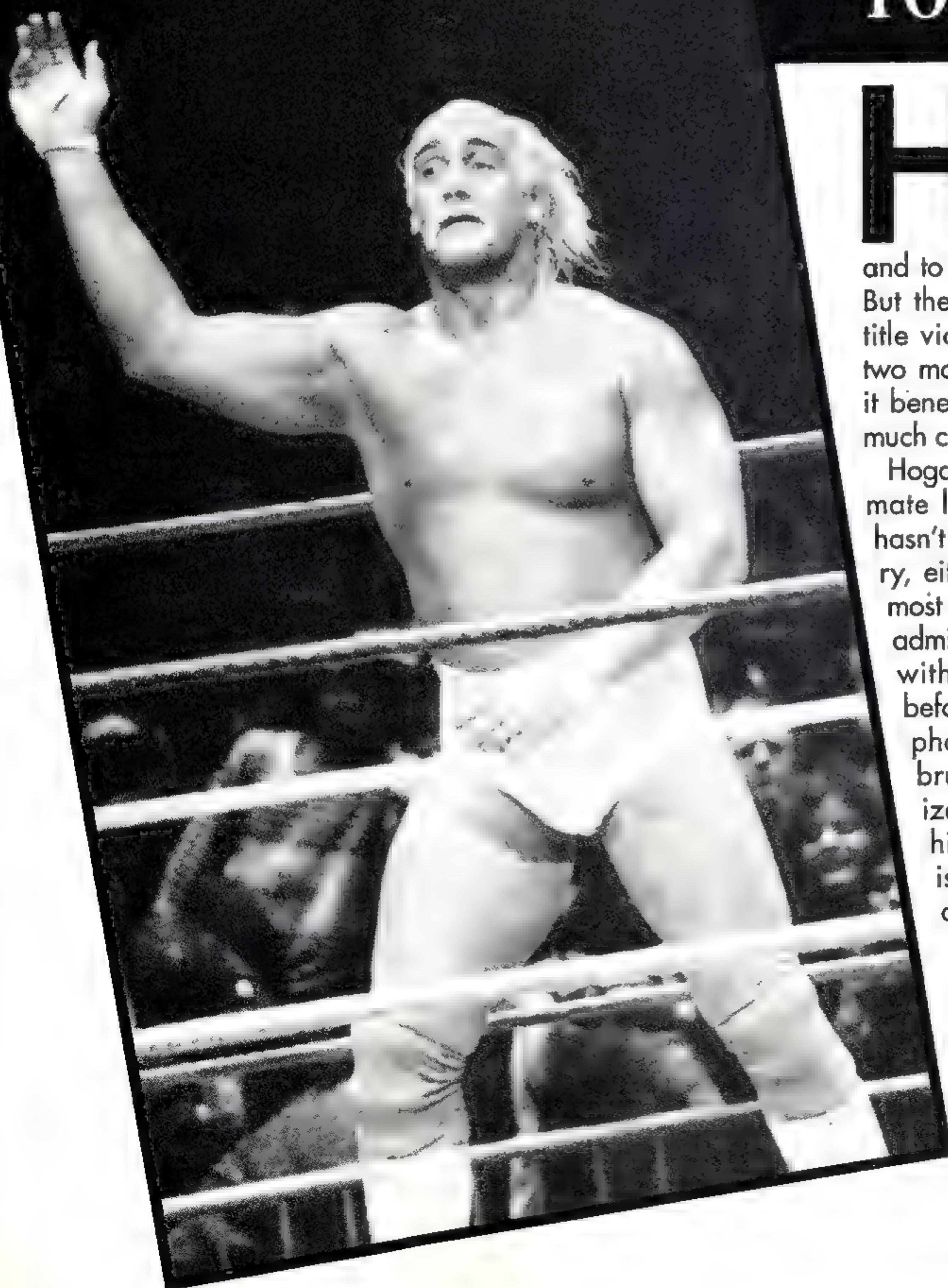
By Chris Bernucca

Can Hulk Hogan beat Yokozuna? Not if he continues to wrestle in the same fashion that brought him five WWF World titles. But if he follows our advice and drastically alters his approach, a sixth title's a lock



STER"

A FOOLPROOF WAY TO BEAT YOKOZUNA



HULK HOGAN'S FANS cried "foul" following his loss to Yokozuna at the "King Of The Ring" card in Dayton, Ohio, and to be sure, there was a foul. But there was also a foul at his title victory at WrestleMania IX two months earlier, and because it benefited Hogan, there wasn't much crying.

Hogan hasn't suffered a legitimate loss to Yokozuna, but he hasn't scored a legitimate victory, either. Even the "Hulkster's" most ardent fan would have to admit he had plenty of trouble with the Samoan in Dayton before being ambushed by a photographer's fireball. His brute strength was neutralized by his larger foe, and his clothesline-legdrop finishing maneuver was rendered ineffective.

Beating Yokozuna will be the greatest challenge of his career. In fact, the preparation for a rematch will make that rematch seem like child's play. To regain the belt, Hogan must follow these three steps.

1. Demand a title match that prohibits managers from ring-side. Hogan currently calls Jimmy Hart his manager, but how much management does he truly provide? Here's a man who spent much of his career battling Hogan, not backing him. Hogan won four WWF World titles before allying with Hart, and doesn't need the input from the "Mouth Of The South" in order to regain the belt.

This is no slight at Hart, though. Were he to be removed from ring-side, then Mr. Fuji would also have to leave. Hogan certainly stands to lose less from the

expert Thomas Pilliard. "Neither of those matches had what we call a 'clean finish.' Both outcomes were tarnished by the events immediately preceding them. I'm sure the fans would like to see these two wrestle to a decision, without any interference from anyone."

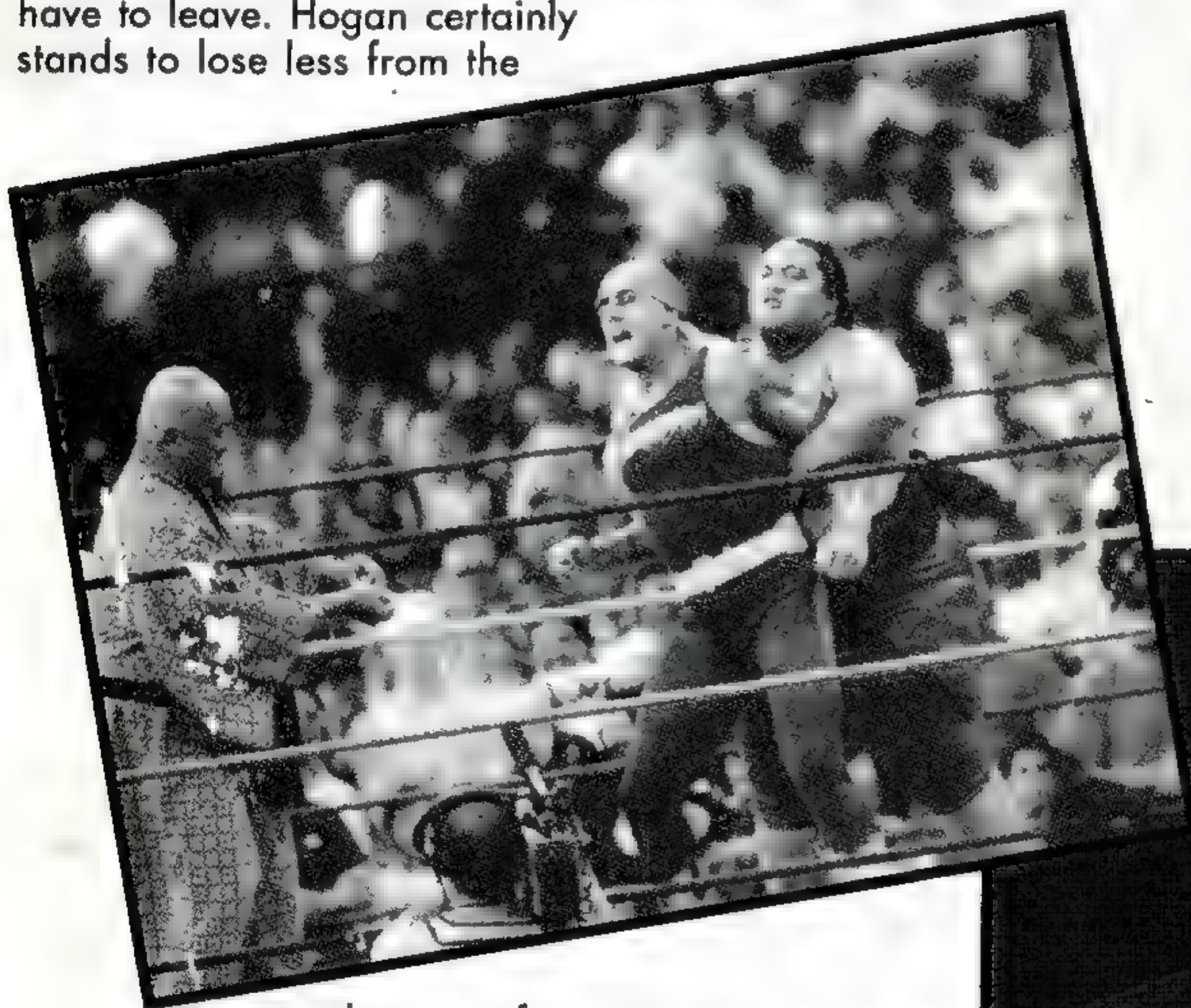
Hogan has enough power to have this stipulation passed by the WWF matchmakers. He also has the videotaped evidence of Fuji's behavior in the two previous matches. Hart would probably be willing to wait in the lock-

er room if he knew Hogan would have the belt once he returned.

2. Use agility to wear out Yokozuna. No one thinks of Hogan as an agile wrestler, but that's his definitive advantage over Yokozuna. We're not talking about somersaults off the top rope or rolling savate kicks. We do believe Hogan's edge in speed can work in his favor.

At 550 pounds, nothing Yokozuna does in the ring can be described as "quick." He uses plenty of time to charge an awaiting opponent in the corner, and his "bonsai" sitdown splash is often executed on a foe already incapable of moving. An alert opponent can see his telegraphed moves and maneuvers a mile away, as Bret Hart did at WrestleMania IX.

Hogan must use superior speed and agility to wear down Yokozuna, whose lack of stamina has been exposed. He must use



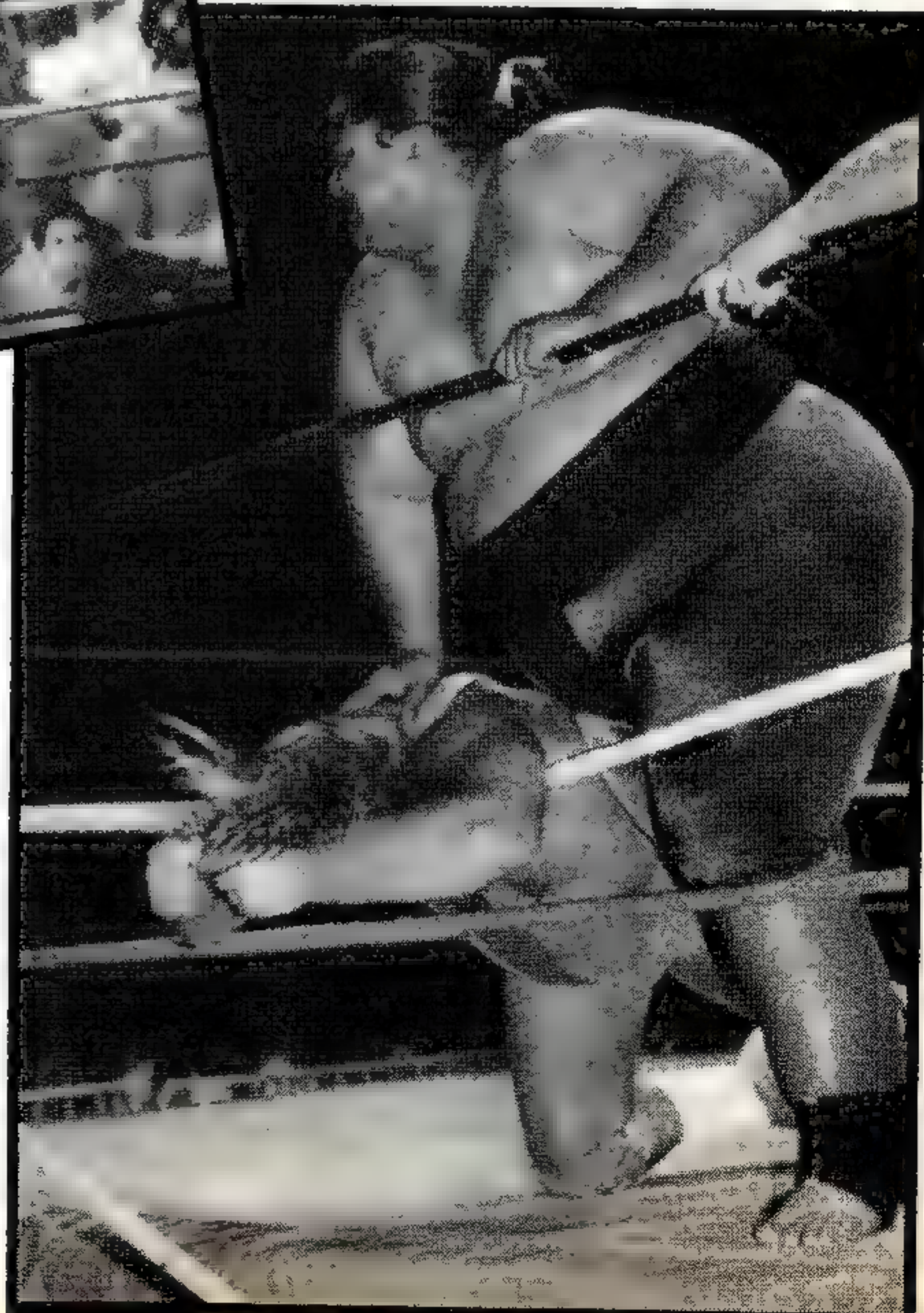
absence of a manager than does Yokozuna, whose two title victories can be traced directly to Fuji's interference.

For some reason, Hogan has always allowed himself to be distracted by Fuji. The rival manager has become a mosquito buzzing in his ear, and Fuji knows it. For the "Hulkster" to regain the title, he cannot be bothered by distractions, and must insist on Fuji's banishment from ringside.

"Let's face it," offered WWF

If Hulk Hogan can find a way to eliminate Mr. Fuji's presence, he'd stand a far better chance of winning his rubber match against Yokozuna.

Yokozuna is not invincible and has some weak points, but they have yet to be discovered by Hacksaw Duggan.



the entire ring, forcing Yokozuna to chase him. Hogan cannot leave the ring and allow the Samoan valuable rest periods. On at least three occasions, he'll have to play possum and lead Yokozuna to think he's helpless in a corner or on the mat. This will tire his opponent, making him susceptible to...

3. A submission hold developed through intensified training. Hogan's famed clothesline-leg-drop combination pinned Yokozuna at WrestleMania IX, but his opponent had salt in his eyes. When he attempted the same finishing maneuver at the "King Of The Ring" card, Yokozuna powered out of it, frustrating the "Hulkster."

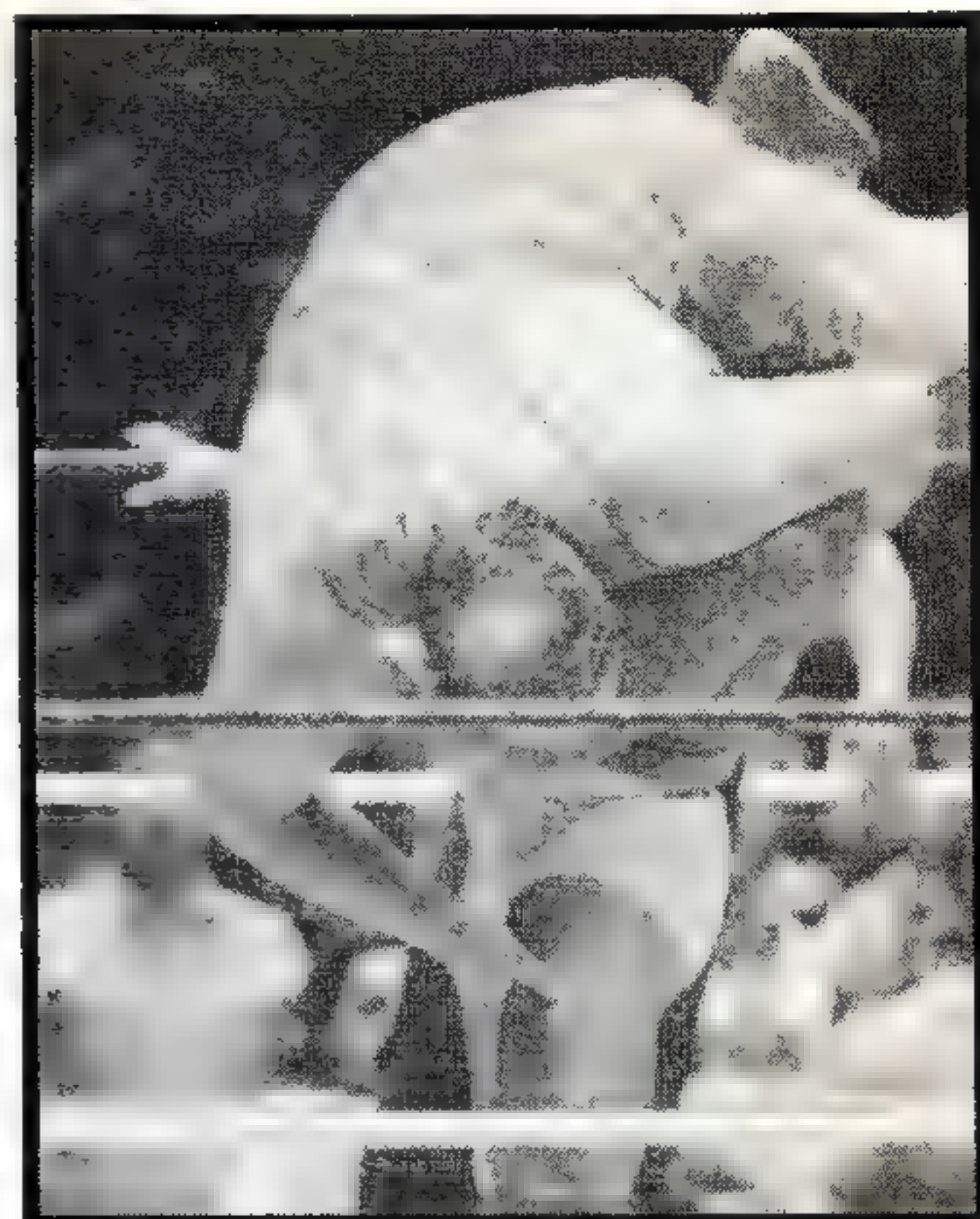
Hogan must realize Yokozuna cannot be pinned. Conversations with Randy Savage, Hacksaw Duggan, and Bret Hart should cure him of his stubbornness. He must abandon everything that's made him a successful wrestler and employ a new strategy to both confuse and abuse his foe.

Hogan must go into seclusion with an accomplished scientific wrestler, perhaps Hart or Bob Backlund. He must learn and perfect a submission hold, preferably one attacking Yokozuna's legs. By forcing the champ to chase him, the sumo star's wheels will tire—making him prime prey for several submission holds. The figure-four leglock is a possibility, as is the Boston crab. But the one hold we know can neutralize Yokozuna is Hart's "sharpshooter" leglock.

"You wouldn't be writing this

story if Fuji hadn't thrown salt in Hart's face at WrestleMania," said Pilliard. "Yokozuna was seconds from giving in to the sharpshooter. That match revealed that Yokozuna can be beaten, at least by Hart. Hogan must employ some sort of similar strategy if he wants the belt back."

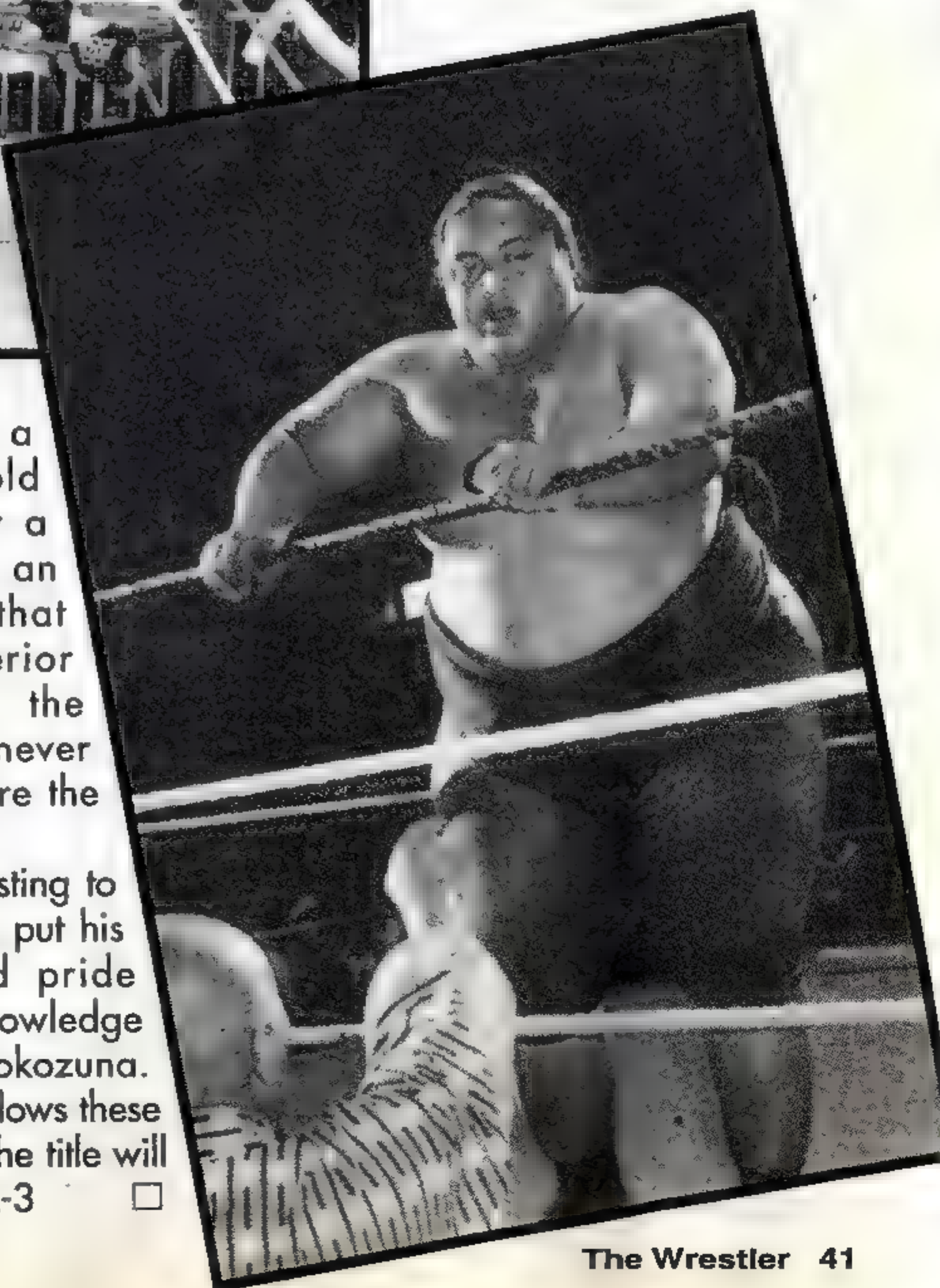
This will be the hardest part for Hogan. As they say, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. He's never relied much on scientific skill and may be unwilling to put in the work. Pride may get in the way as well; Hogan became a five-time champ by doing things



The "Hulkster" has handled dominant larger foes such as Earthquake in the past (above). He'll need superior agility, however, to avoid the deadly splash of Yokozuna (left), who has yet to demonstrate he can win without Mr. Fuji's crafty guidance (below).

his way. Using a submission hold popularized by a rival would be an admittal of that wrestler's superior ability, and the "Hulkster" has never been one to share the spotlight.

It will be interesting to see if Hogan can put his knowledge and pride aside, and acknowledge he cannot pin Yokozuna. However, if he follows these steps, regaining the title will be as easy as 1-2-3 □



2 COLD SCORPIO

VS.

BARRY WINDHAM:

By Dave Rosenbaum

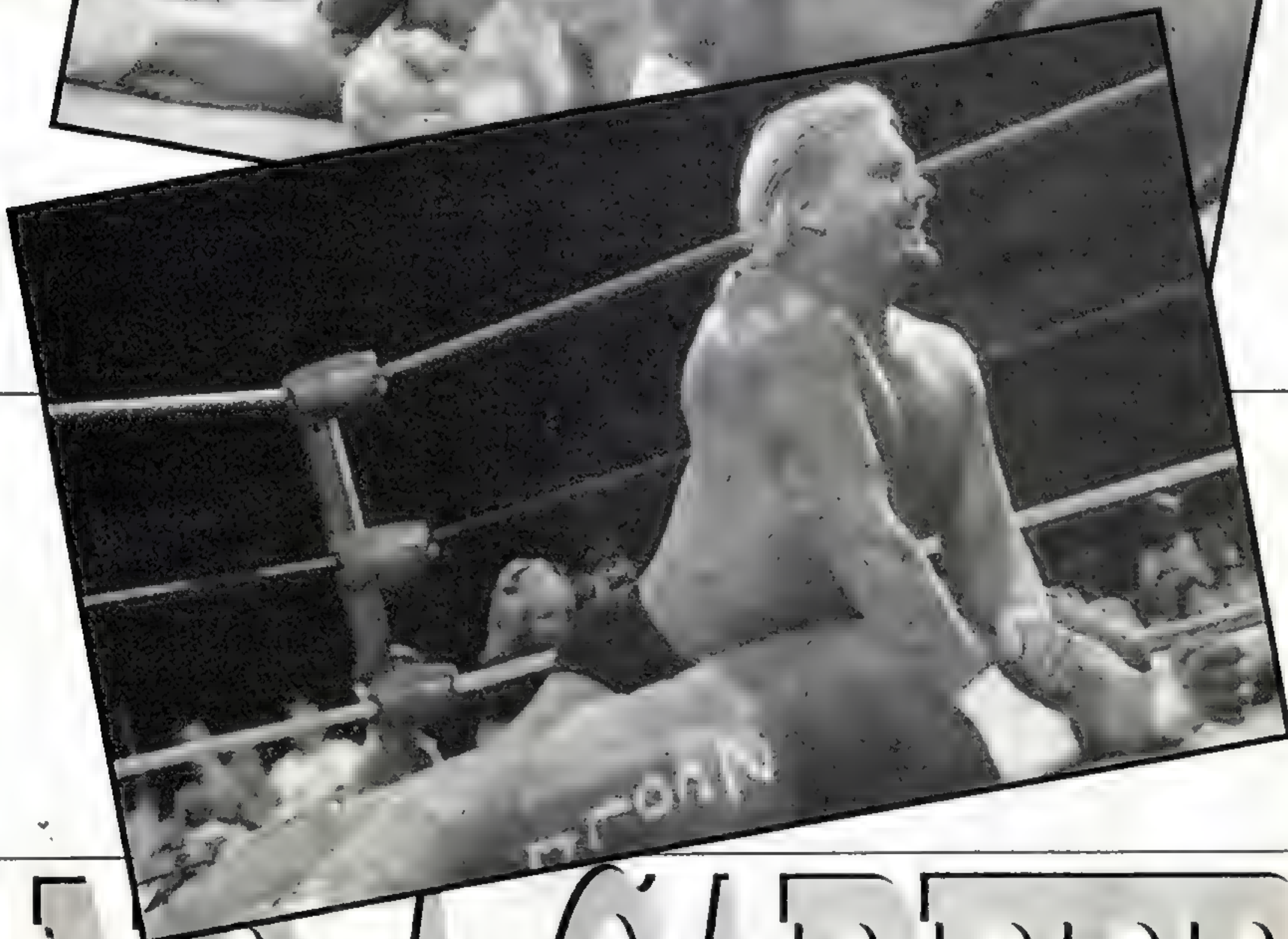
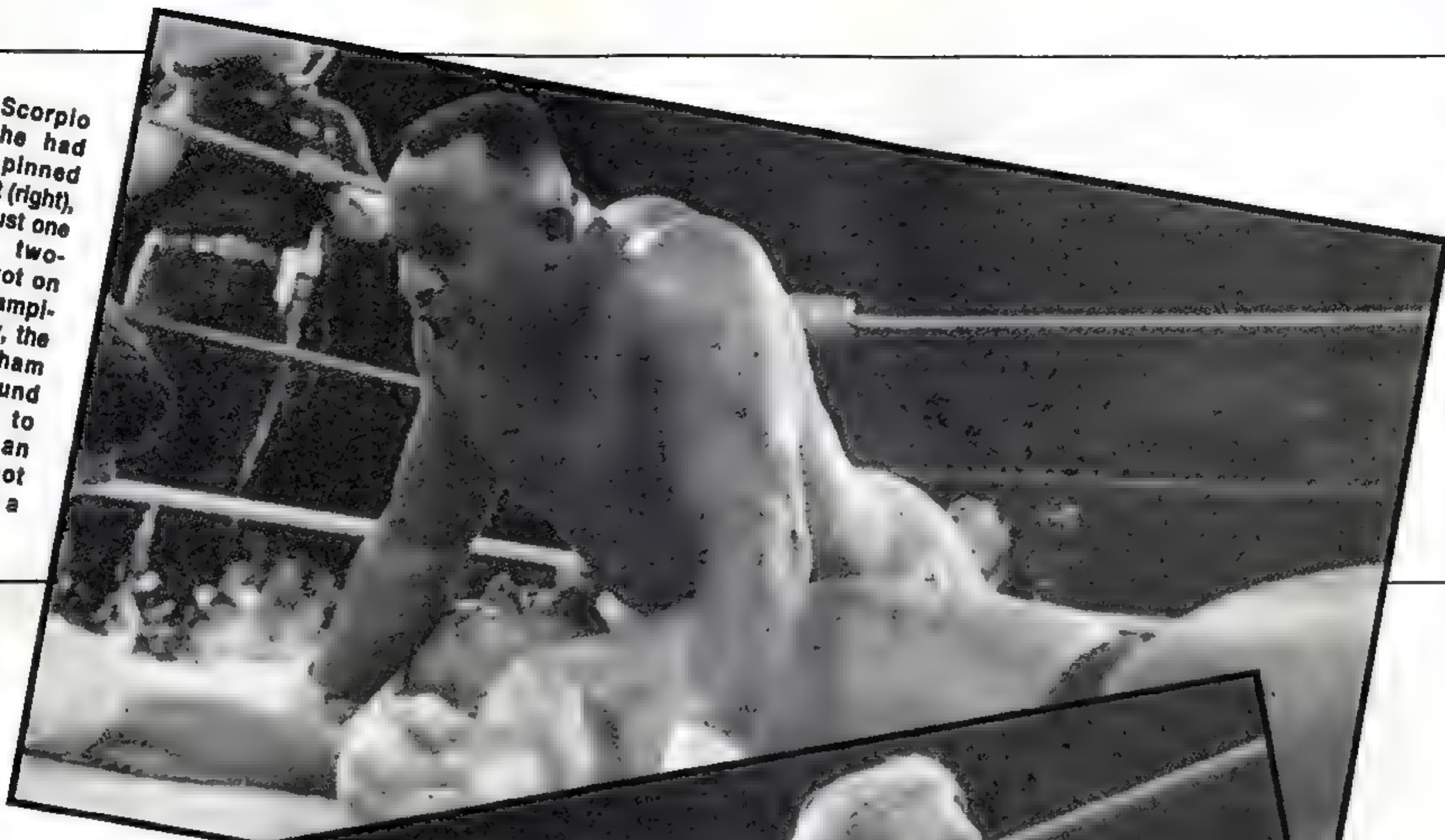
Scorpio proved he's ready for stardom in his Clash of the Champions XXIII match against Windham. Despite a mistake that cost him the match, his solo career is now in full gear

EVERY WRESTLER reaches that moment, that instant or match when he realizes a lifelong goal is either in or out of reach. It's when he goes head-to-head with one of the world's best, and either passes or fails the test.

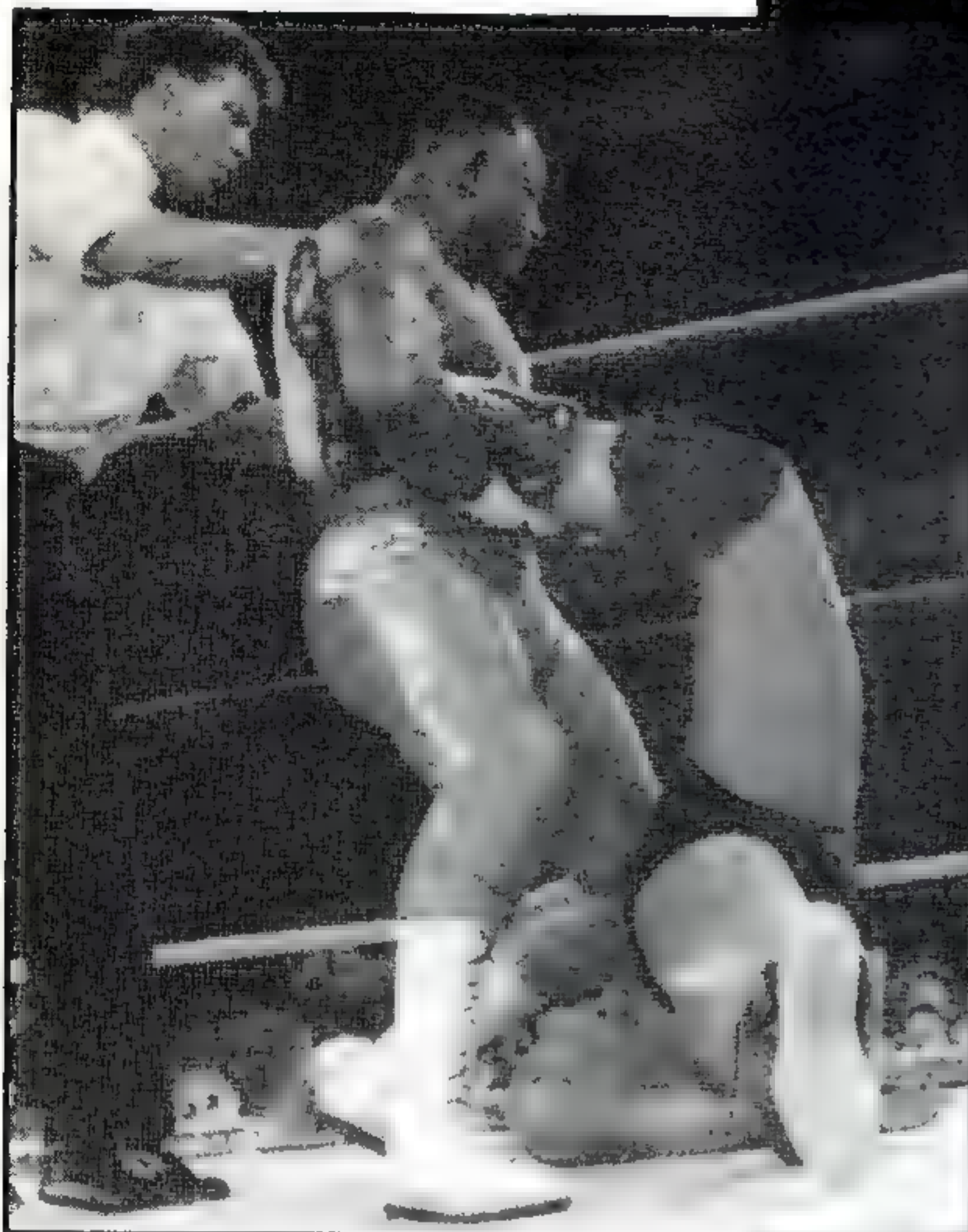
2 Cold Scorpio has never lacked confidence. The young aerialist loves to show off his skills, boldly proclaiming he's the next great high-flying wrestler. Best of all, Scorpio allied himself with tag team partner Marcus Alexander Bagwell. They're an outstanding, up-and-coming duo.

But every young wrestler has that heavyweight cham-

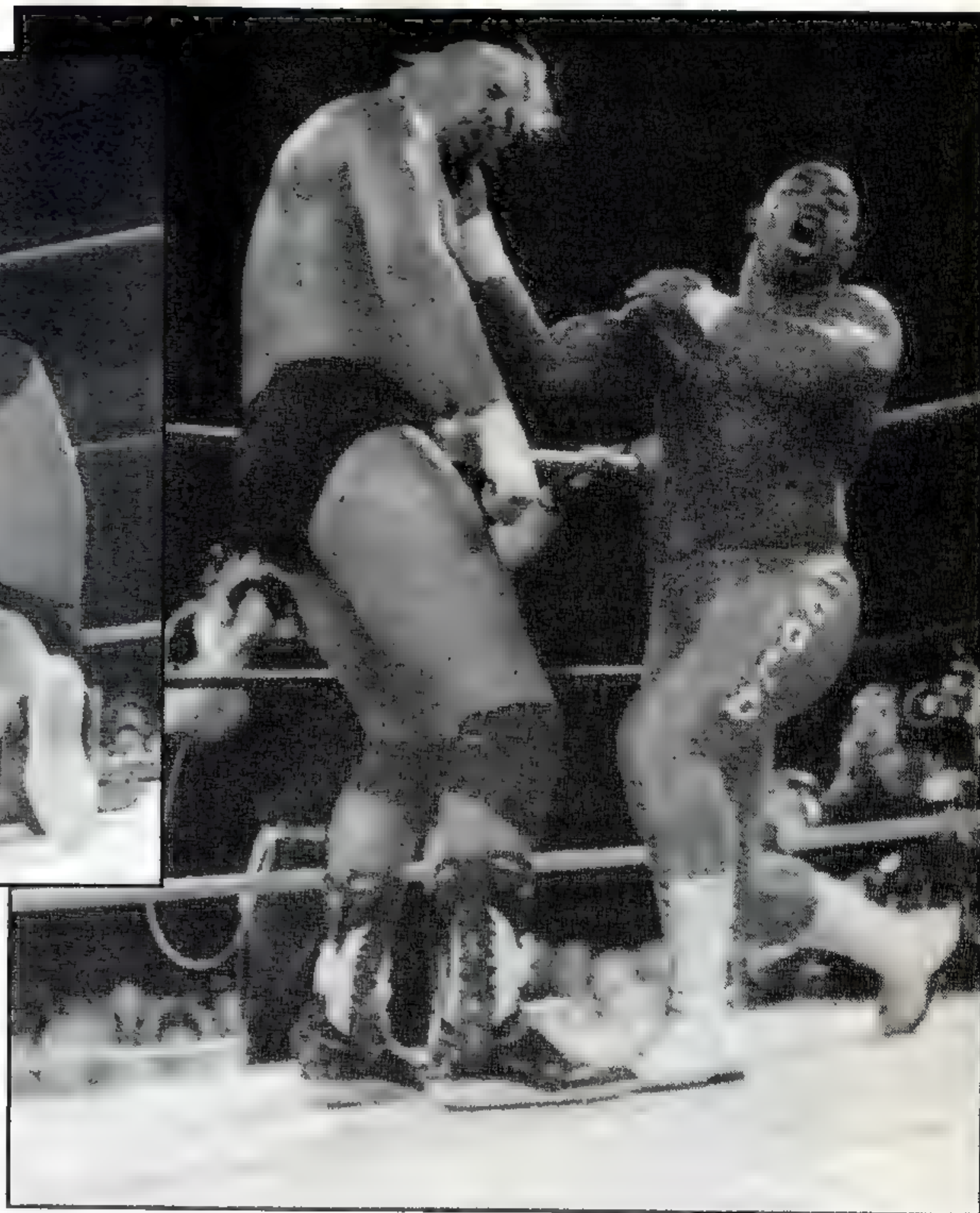
2 Cold Scorpio thought he had Windham pinned at this point (right), but it was just one of seven two-counts he got on the NWA champion. Contrarily, the gleeful Windham has been around long enough to know when an opponent is not going to escape a cover (below).



AND A CARTER



Scorpio is able to maneuver Windham into a half-Boston crab, but the veteran champion is able to work his way to the ropes, forcing his challenger to release his grip.



pionship dream. For some it's unattainable. Maybe the skills aren't there, or he lacks perseverance. Perhaps he failed that one big test of his life.

The test that Scorpio faced on June 17 at the Scope in Norfolk, Virginia. The test he took—and passed—against Barry Windham before a live national cable-TV audience at Clash of the Champions XXIII. It proved Scorpio is almost ready. Almost ... but not quite.

"I'm real pleased with my performance," he said. "I was flying and styling there for a while, but my opponent was a tough man. But I proved I can get in the ring with one of the best wrestlers in the world and almost beat him."

Scorpio's match was more than a benchmark in the career of the charismatic man from Denver, Colorado, and more

Proving that he can vary his attack, Scorpio stuns his taller, more experienced opponent with a solid right cross (above) and a spectacular flying dropkick from the top rope (below). Still, he was unable to put Windham away.



than another NWA title defense for Windham. It was an outstanding display of skills, a sure Match of the Year candidate, and easily the best match on the card.

"It was a great match, but I won," Windham said. "He lost. Yeah, he wrestled well, but let's see him do it again. Let's see him win next time."

Scorpio would love the opportunity. He took plenty of criticism for briefly leaving WCW to tour Japan just prior to the Clash. He wanted to show off his flying to the Japanese fans—and hone his skills against different competition—but many thought he should have stayed home and prepared for Windham, or even forget solo work and concen-

trate on teaming with Bagwell.

"I heard the criticism," he said. "But I think I learned a lot from my time in Japan. I'd like to go back there real soon."

A reporter asked Scorpio if he was suffering from jet lag. "Did it look like I had jet lag?" he shot back. "I'm fine. I just happened to be wrestling one of the greatest wrestlers in the world."

The skeptics will note that Windham, truly among the world's elite wrestlers, had his mind on The Four Horsemen and didn't put his full effort into the Scorpio match until realizing it was necessary. Windham's lackluster pin attempts early on show that might have been the case.

And Windham, of course, was the overwhelming favorite. Had there been betting on this match, he would have been 1-to-5 against the young stud.

"I wouldn't have bet on the kid," WCW commentator Jesse Ventura said. "I didn't think he stood a chance. If he won, it would've been the upset of the year. The thing is, a lot of times young wrestlers do great in their first big match because they have the adrenaline going. I agree with Windham. Let's see him do it again."

Scorpio will undoubtedly get a second chance because of his fine performance. He had seven two-counts, a few of which came so close to being three-counts. However, he made a fatal error. When Windham threw Scorpio through the ropes and onto the apron, he tried to re-enter the ring by catapulting himself over the top rope. Nice try.

Scorpio's over-exuberance was a mistake, and Windham retaliated with a right hand to the jaw. The champ then caught him with a DDT to cover him for the pin at 12:50.

"It was a dumb mistake, but I had the momentum and I didn't want to give Windham a chance to catch his breath," Scorpio said. "I wanted a fast pace and Windham was trying to slow it down. Next time I'll be a little more careful."

To Windham's credit, he dominated most of the match and should have won within the first five minutes. The champ, a fine scientific wrestler, chose to batter the youngster with right hands and whips into the turnbuckle.

In the fourth minute, Scorpio took a vicious knee to the chest and was bounced throat-first off the top rope. In the fifth minute, Windham had his first sloppy pin attempt, but followed up the two-count by raking Scorpio's eyes and face.

"I wanted him hurting," Windham said. "The idea was to slow him down and wear him down. Scorpio's nothing without his speed."

Scorpio made the mistake of trying to outpunch the "Lone Wolf," who came back with a DDT for a two-count. With Windham completely in control, Scorpio reversed his fortunes with a spectacular high-risk maneuver. He rammed Windham, then dove over the top rope to catch him for a two-count. Windham regained control and went for a belly-to-back suplex, but Scorpio countered by crawling down his back and rolling over for a two-count.

"At that point I really thought I had him," Scorpio said. "Maybe that was stupid on my part, but the momentum was going my way."

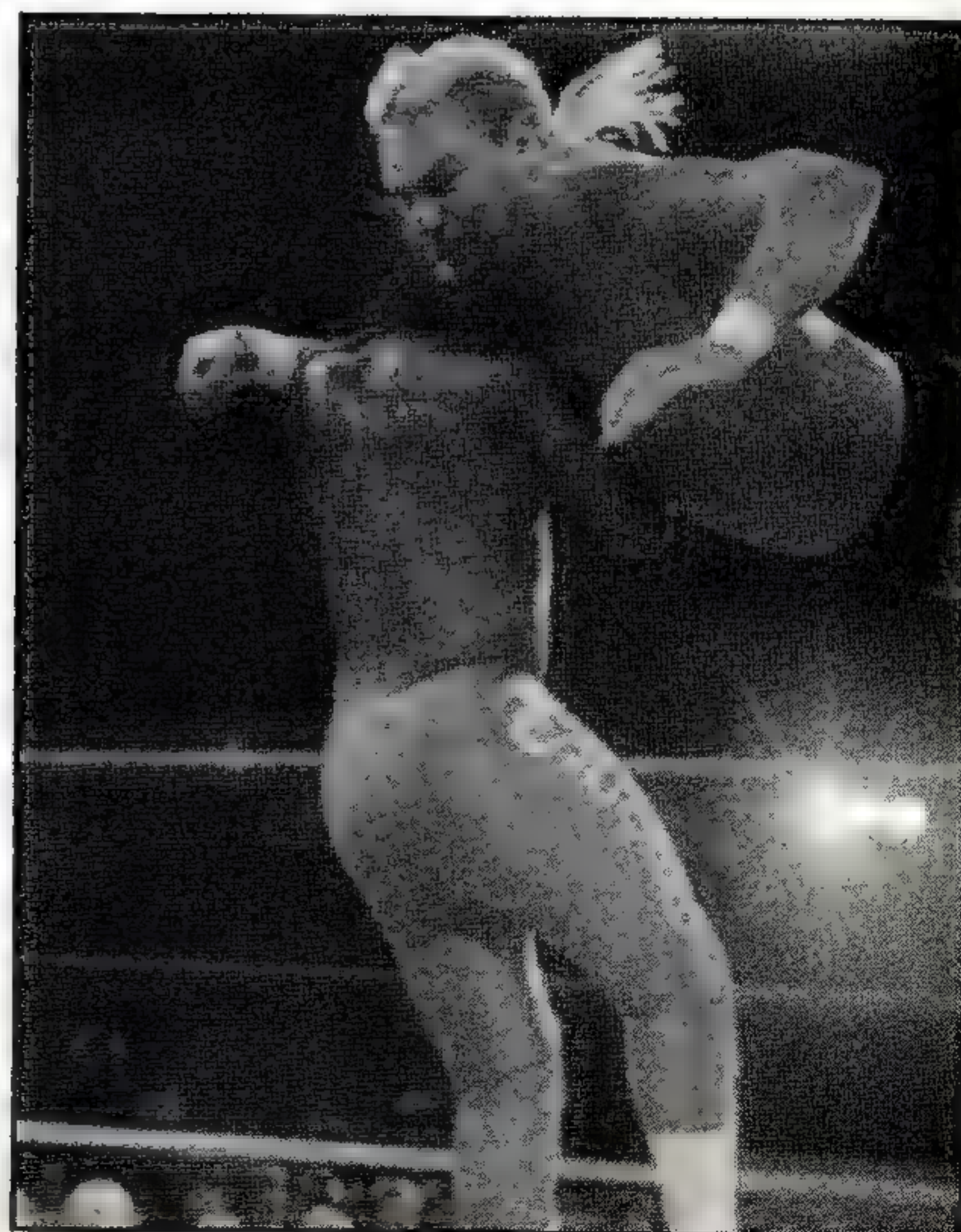
Scorpio, in fact, seemed to have fought his way out of danger. At 10:45, Windham placed him on the top rope for a suplex, but Scorpio pushed him to the mat and got a two-count. Scorpio caught the champ in two victory rolls, the second of which resulted in yet another two-count.

The crowd was clearly on Scorpio's side. Windham looked tired, dazed, old, and fat. It was a ruse; his brain is always working. With one right hand, he reversed the tide of the match and escaped a shocking upset.

"That's what champions are all about," Windham said.

"He's right," Scorpio said. "But now I know." □

Windham uses his aerial ability only in rare instances, making the moves that much more effective. This stunning clothesline set up his victory against Scorpio.



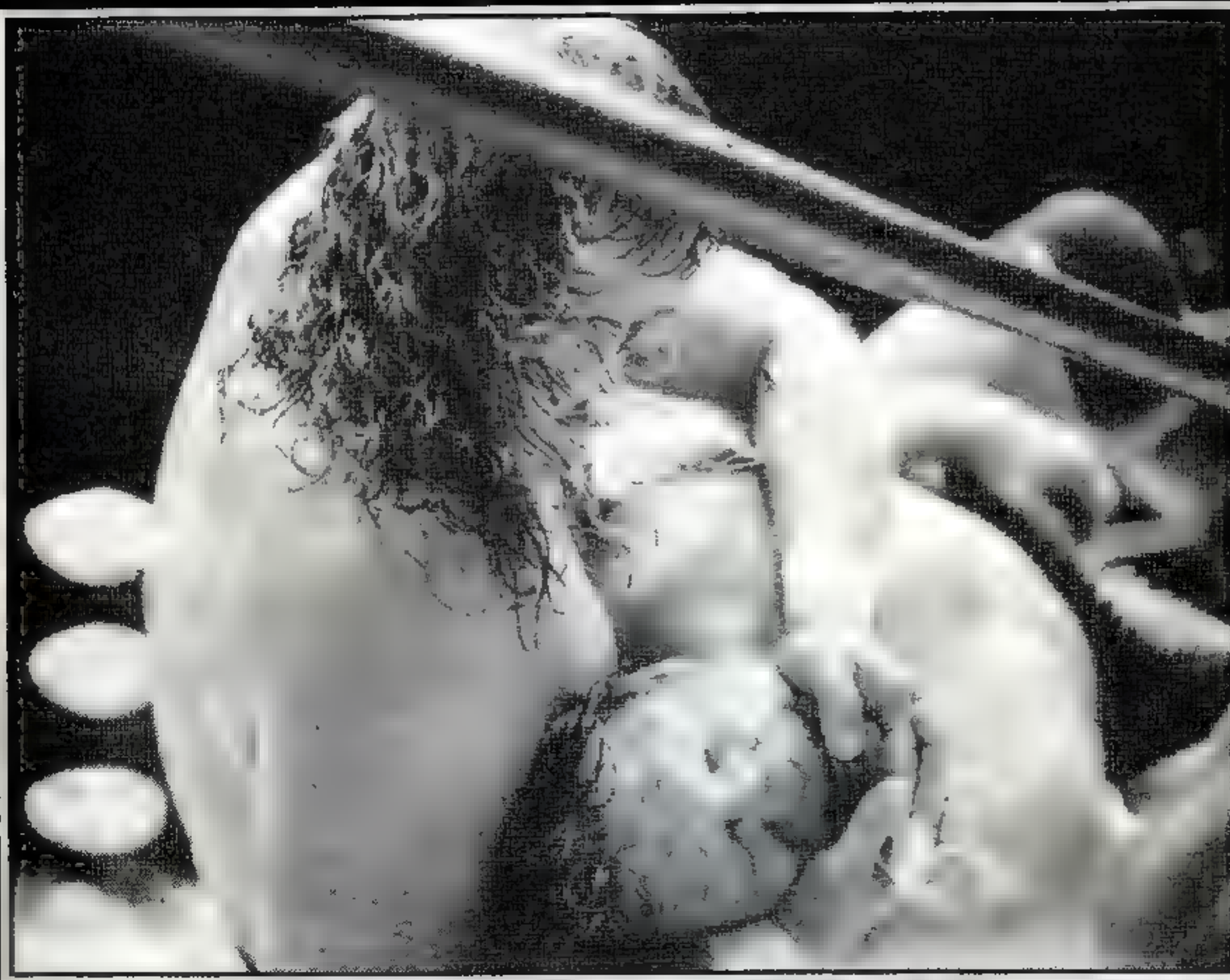
BEST FRIENDS BY DAY,

By H. Hosaka

IN THE MORNINGS, they rise and work out together in a semi-private Tokyo gym. They spend afternoons eating lunch, talking about the upcoming night's matches, and playing punch-for-punch. When early evening rolls around, they help psych each other up and put on their game faces.

Stan Hansen, Terry Gordy, and Steve Williams are natural friends. They're all from the U.S., of course, but they're also

TERRY GORDY AND STAN HANSEN:



DEADLY ENEMIES BY NIGHT

A tough-man competition with a twist challenged Gordy and Hansen, and also put them on opposite sides of the ring. These American stars wanted a shot at the Triple Crown, but also wanted to prove something ... to each other

three of the world's toughest wrestlers. In Japan, where they currently compete, the trio sticks together.

But on June 1 at Tokyo's Budokan Hall, Hansen and Gordy found themselves at odds and on opposite sides of the ring. They'd reached the finals of a tourney to decide the toughest foreign wrestler in Japan, and determine the next challenger for Triple Crown champion Mitsuharu Misawa. On this day, and the ones leading up to it, the Hansen-Gordy friendship was tested.

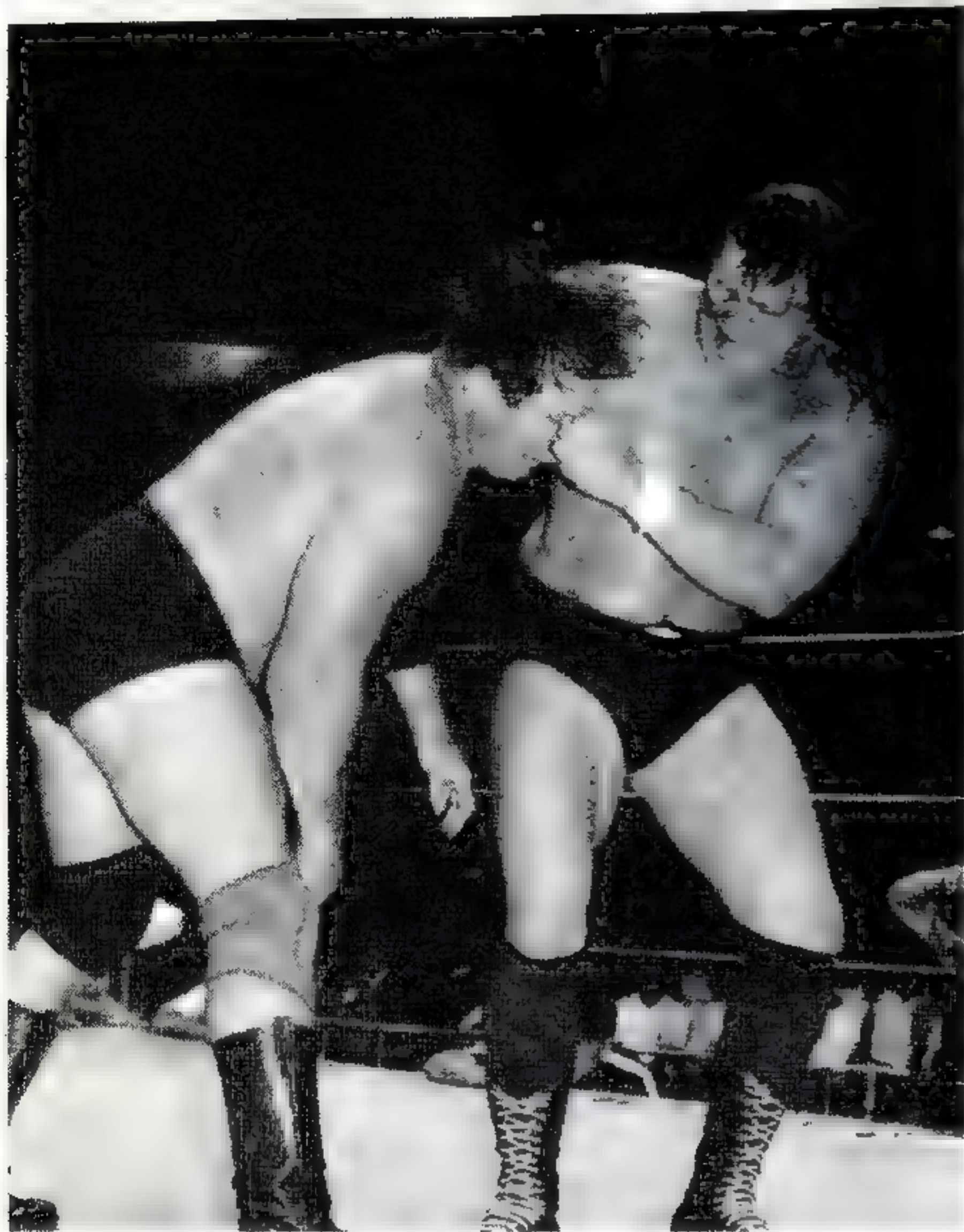
"They wanted no part of each other," Williams reported. "I was trying to stay neutral because I didn't want to be accused of favoring one over the other, but one day Bam Bam (Gordy) came up to me and said, 'We're partners. Give me a hand.' I told him to get by on his own. He's a man."

Hansen and Gordy never expected to oppose each other. They are allies on foreign turf, and usually face Japanese wrestlers. They and Williams work in Japan because they like the competition, the sport, the fans' reaction, and the style of living. The threesome's all-out, no-nonsense brawling style has made its mark with the Japanese public.

Many of the host wrestlers don't like

In the heat of battle, Hansen doesn't give a second thought to lifting his buddy up and driving his head into the mat (right), nor does Gordy take it easy in headlocking Hansen (below). While this was a match neither wanted, both went about it with their usual professionalism and determination.





Both tough guys would feel the effects of this match for a while—Hansen from a barrage of chopping lefts to his oft-broken nose (above), Gordy from a Hansen backdrop (below). Their friendship would be unaffected.



the invaders' popularity. Some complain to the promoters, who nonetheless continue to give the Americans top billing. In fact, an insider told *THE WRESTLER* that the toughest foreign wrestler competition was designed to foment dissension among the three U.S. stars.

"Why else? What's the purpose?" the source said. "You don't see WCW or the WWF holding tournaments for Japanese wrestlers, do you? Of course not. The way the tournament was designed, two of these men were destined to meet in the final. Since the prize was also a shot at Misawa, it made the competition even more intense."

The Americans didn't complain; the competition was so appealing. The three had often argued who was the toughest, and the tourney gave them the chance to find out. And when Gordy and Hansen prepared to meet in the final on June 1, both said little outside the ring.

"I have nothing to say," Gordy stated before the match. "Everything that happens will happen right before your eyes. I have lots of respect for Stan and he's one of the best in the world, but not tonight. Tonight, you'll see."

Hansen was just as noncommittal, refusing to predict victory. He said only that he looked forward to wrestling Misawa.

Williams, continuing his vow to remain neutral, visited each dressing room. "Those guys are intense in there," he said. "They mean business, and they'd better. If this match isn't great, I'll kick both their butts."

Hansen had more to lose; it was he, after all, who lost the All-Japan, United National, and PWF heavyweight titles to Misawa on August 22, 1992. But Gordy had a chip on his shoulder; on May 20 in Sapporo, Japan, he and Williams lost the All-Japan and PWF tag belts to Akira Taue and Toshiaki Kawada.

Gordy's losing streak extended into June. His match with Hansen was a brawling classic, neither giving way at any time. But

Hansen proved tougher, covering a reluctant Gordy for the pin.

Afterward, Williams remained neutral by congratulating the winner and consoling the loser, although days later he teamed with Gordy to defeat Hansen and American Joel Deaton.

"It was a great match," Hansen said. "Bam Bam's a great wrestler and I've never said otherwise, but that was one strange night of wrestling. Bam Bam's a friend, but for 15 minutes there he was my worst enemy. When I looked across the ring, I didn't see Bam Bam. I just saw my challenger."

The win really didn't mean that much to Hansen. He has always considered himself the toughest American wrestler, and didn't need a tournament to prove what he already knew. He's also spent most of the past year trying to regain Misawa's title.

The next match between the two should be one of many.

Not surprisingly, the Hansen-Gordy friendship survived this showdown and the tag team matches afterward. Their friendship dates to 1988, when Hansen and Gordy were All-Japan and PWF tag team champions. Similar philosophies have carried them through the years.

"I was never worried," Williams said. "The great thing about the three of us is that we can be friends in the daytime, go into the ring and rip each other to shreds at night, then go out again later that night and laugh about the whole thing."

For one night, the Hansen-Gordy war was no laughing matter. But don't worry. They're best of friends again. □

Hansen tries to rip off the same arm that so often throughout his career he has reached out to during tag team competition.



NO HOLDS BARRED

(Continued from page 8)

The fans, of course, were squarely on Kid's side, hoping for a second upset. They cheered him on, while derisively chanting "One-two-three!" at Ramon. They didn't hide their distaste for the Razor's displays of machismo.

Fine. This all makes sense. Everybody loves the underdog, and I, too, was privately rooting for The Kid to prove the initial win was no fluke.

It didn't happen. Kid showed his cowardly side and absconded with Ramon's dough. He jumped into a getaway car and was driven off into the dark Poughkeepsie night.

Later, the fans derided Ramon when he came out for an interview with Vince McMahon. Again, this all makes sense. Here's where the sense stops.

Ted DiBiase and Irwin R. Schyster—Money Inc.—were then interviewed by McMahon, and the fans booed ever louder. Then DiBiase pulled a shocker, lambasting Ramon for not taking care of his money. "Maybe I can find him a job," said the "Million-Dollar Man."

The fans booed DiBiase and started chanting Ramon's name. In other words, they had turned 180 degrees—and Ramon hadn't done anything to warrant their sudden affection!

It was almost as if DiBiase and McMahon were treating the fans like puppets, pulling their emotional strings. DiBiase, who loves being a rulebreaker, wants

to be the bad guy in a feud with Ramon. He willingly passed the fan favorite's role to Mr. Machismo.

Beautiful. Perfect. DiBiase knows how easily fans can be manipulated.

What's your excuse, people of

board sunglasses. WWF fans, you're an easy sell.

Maybe this is no surprise. In all sports, in fact, fans are drawn more by style than by substance. The old definition of the fan as fanatic no longer applies. How many people do you see

wearing San Jose Sharks jackets? How many of them have ever seen a Sharks game, or can even name one of their players?

Children, and even many adults, now wear baseball caps for the design. Twenty years ago, a St. Louis fan wouldn't be caught dead in anything but a Cardinals cap. Today, they wear Chicago White Sox caps, even though many probably couldn't tell Frank Thomas from Lowell Thomas.

Fans, fickle? No, not at all. They go with the wind.

By this time next year, Razor Ramon will be a fan favorite, Rick and Scott Steiner will be rule-

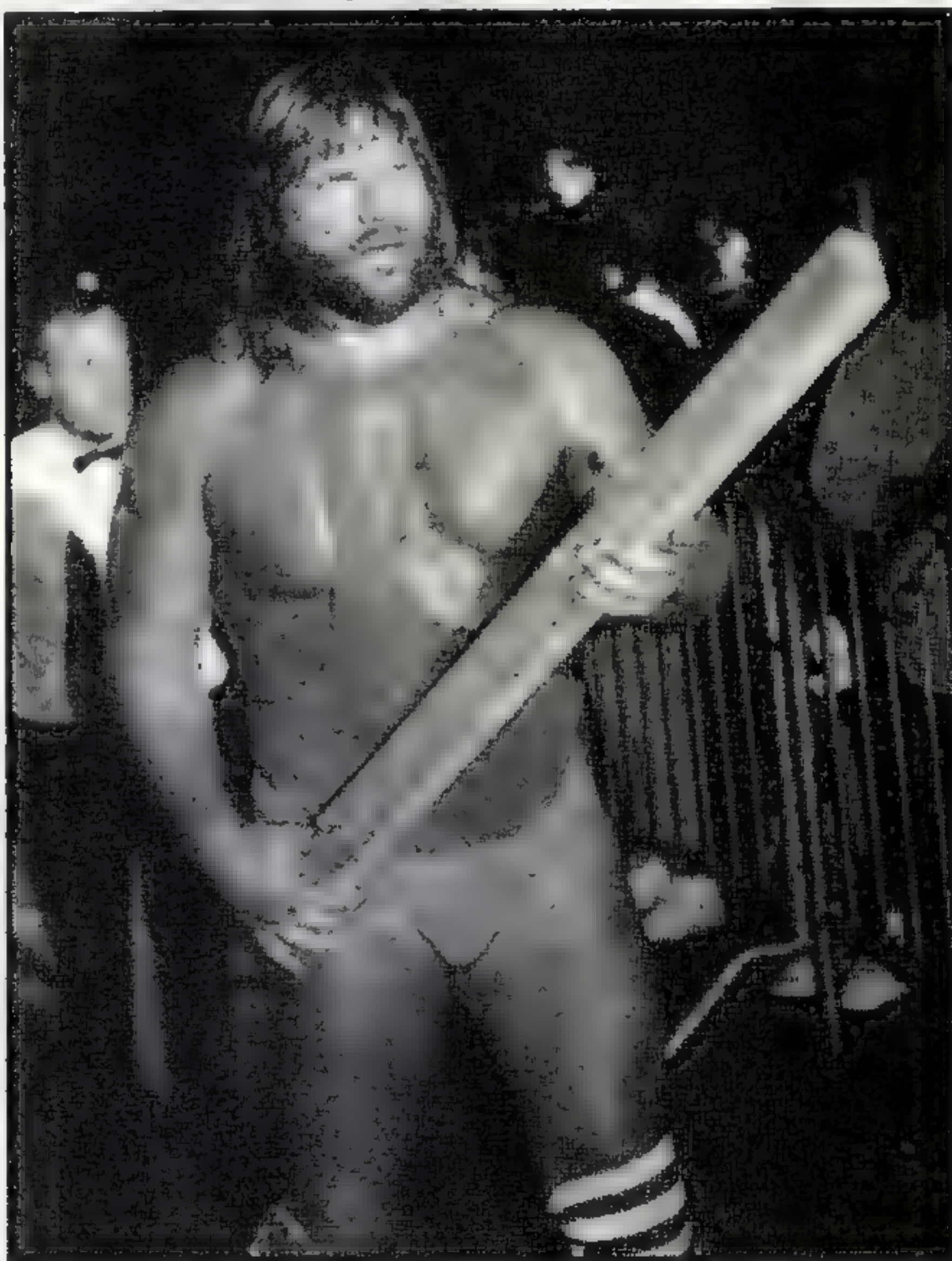
breakers, Yokozuna will be an adopted American, and Randy Savage will be the most hated man in the federation.

All because of you, fans.

Halfway through the card, I spotted Matt Brock sitting behind three extremely fat women (all wearing—good heavens!—red tank tops). He noticed me and shook his head.

"Four bucks for a cup of beer!" Matt shouted.

I guess ol' Matt was off-duty that night, too. □



The mentality that allows WWF fans to quickly shift allegiances may explain why foam Hacksaw Jim Duggan 2x4s and other souvenirs are such hot sellers.

Poughkeepsie? Let's review your actions:

You cheered the underdog, who turned out to be a criminal. You booed the bad guy, who wanted to cripple the underdog. You booed DiBiase, who criticized the bad guy. And then you cheered the bad guy, who hadn't done anything else.

No wonder foam Hacksaw Duggan 2x4s (at \$6 a pop) sell like hotcakes at WWF events. No wonder so many kids walk around with \$6 Bret Hart card-

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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)

for the cameras all the time.

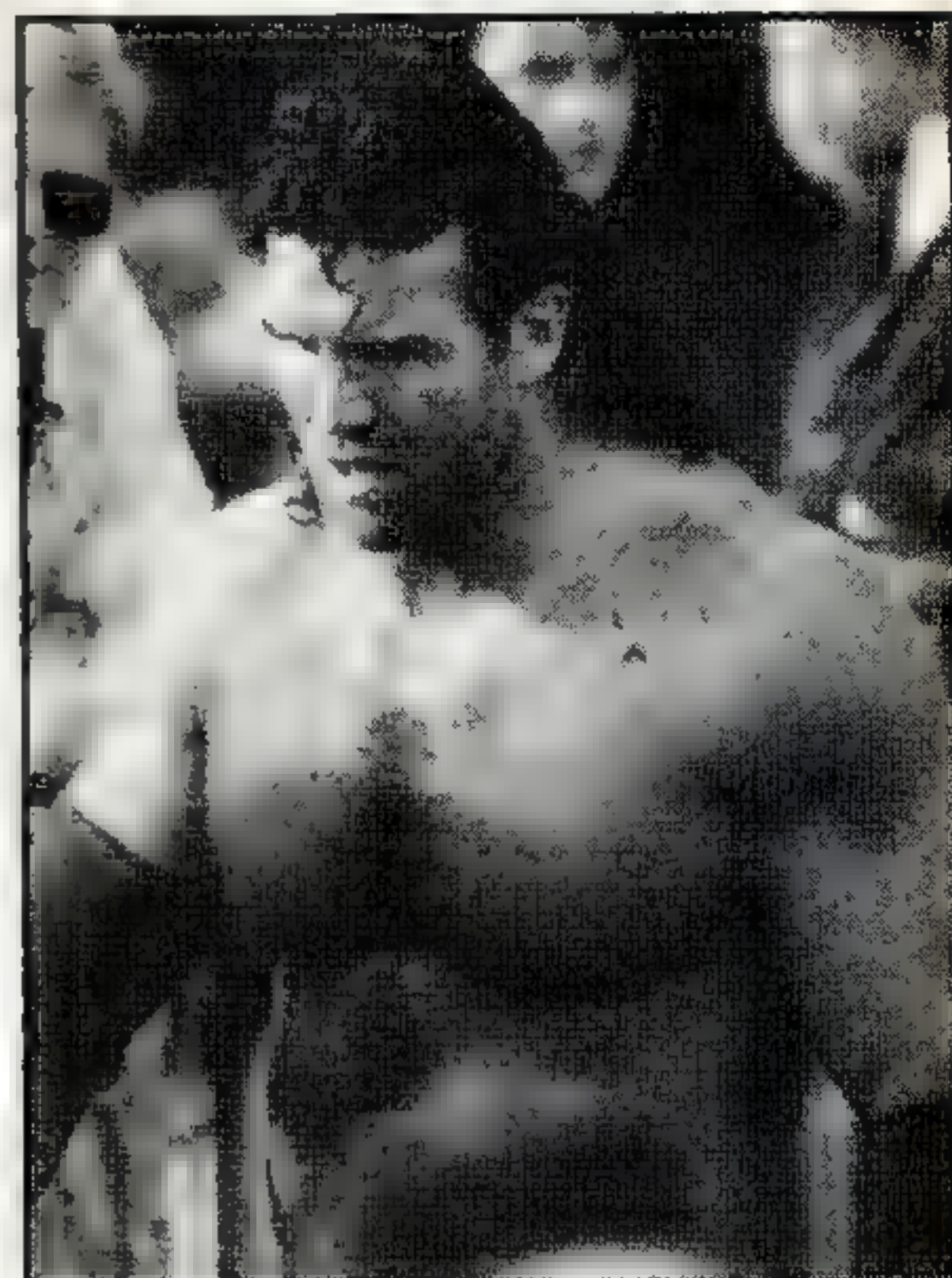
Instead, you get outstanding, intense action every night. The wrestlers here always give it their all, with only one goal in mind: winning the match. They don't care if the win's not all that pretty. The won-loss record is what counts. That's wrestling at its best!

GENE GRIMLEY
Memphis

DULL RAZOR

A few months ago, Dave Rosenbaum wrote "Razor Ramon: A World Title By March—Or A Bum By April" (April 1993). As things stand now, his pronouncement was only slightly premature.

April and WrestleMania came, and Razor scored an upset victory over Bob Backlund. Surely, this signaled the end of Ramon's swoon. Then came the month of May. In one particularly disastrous week, Ramon was pinned by Tatanka and The Kid. *Who?* While The Kid is an exceptionally gifted light heavyweight, that is precisely what he is—a light heavyweight barely topping 200 pounds. The 290-pound Razor should have



The fact that Razor Ramon continues to struggle against inferior competition puzzles reader Richard Evans.

slashed him to shreds.

Perhaps in desperation, Ramon has interfered in Bret Hart-Lex Luger bouts across the country, evoking the ire of both wrestlers. I think where Razor is concerned, the Schick has really hit the fan.

RICHARD EVANS
Gulfport, MS

KING OF THE TUBE

You can forget about "A Flair For The Gold," because the greatest television segment in the history of wrestling is now upon us. Naturally, it's in the WWF, and it's called "The King's Court." Jerry "The King" Lawler, who treats us to his insightful and witty color commentary on WWF telecasts, now gets the chance to enlighten us even more with his own talk segment.

I predict that "The King's Court" will be a rousing success. It will be yet another jewel in the king of wrestling's crown.

JIM IMBRUGLIA
Medford, MA □

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CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS

(Continued from page 14)



Johnny B. Badd was as good as ever, defeating Michael Hayes after a powerslam.

Corbin, KY (Correspondent—Fred Lucas): This match spotlighted two of WCW's flashiest grapplers, Johnny B. Badd and former Freebird Michael Hayes. Both entered the ring to tremendous ovations. The fans began rallying behind Badd after Hayes falsely claimed his hair was being pulled.

Hayes quickly grabbed the advantage and maintained it for most of the bout. The crowd began chanting "D-D-T," a maneuver he nearly pulled off before Badd executed a back-drop. That changed the pace of the match. Badd followed with a

powerslam and scored the pin.

In other bouts: Junkyard Dog & Marcus Alexander Bagwell defeated Steve Austin & Steve Regal ... Vinnie Vegas beat Johnny Gunn ... Kent & Keith Cole fought to a draw with Tex Slazenger & Shanghai Pierce ... Gunn defeated Buddy Lee Parker.

Mississauga, Ontario (Correspondent—Jim Smith): After a successful stint in Japan, Tiger Jeet Singh returned to Toronto just in time to headline a card at the International Center. Tiger was scheduled to defend his UWA championship (a title he won from Japanese legend Antonio Inoki) against the monstrous Gladiator in an anything-goes street fight.

As Tiger approached the ring to a rousing ovation, The Gladiator stormed the squared circle and attacked him from behind. They left the ring and battled throughout the arena, pounding each other with chairs and an assortment of foreign objects. Within two minutes, both were a bloody mess. Finally, Tiger forced Gladiator inside the ring, applying his renowned headscissors. After the hold was broken, action again spilled outside, where both used anything in sight to advantage.

Eventually, Abdullah the Butcher interfered on Gladiator's behalf, prompting Tiger Jr. to assist his father. The referee disqualified Gladiator after the Singhs chased him and Abdullah back to the dressing room and they refused to return to answer a challenge.

In other bouts: Joe Stone pinned Johnny Destiny following

a kneedrop ... Paul Singh defeated Abdullah by disqualification ... Johnny K-9 pinned The Rage Killer following a headbutt from the top rope.

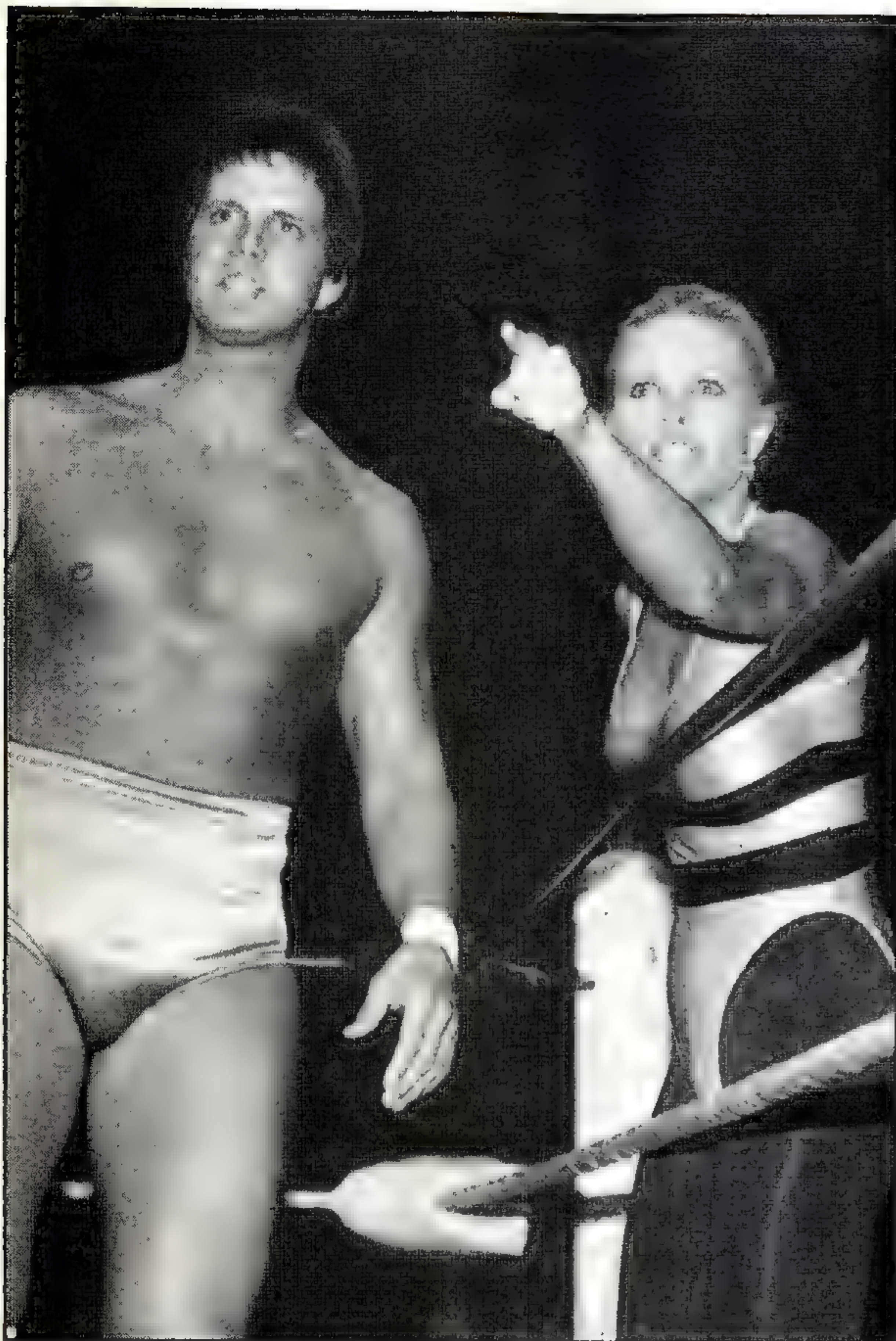
Dallas, TX (Correspondent—Ernest Miller): Heads were spinning as GWF met *Divorce Court* at the Sportatorium. It's one thing to have marital problems, but when they start to directly affect your progress in the ring, things really get sticky. It happened to Chris Adams.

As he was in the ring preparing to take on Iceman Parsons, a strange thing happened. His wife, Toni, who is close to becoming the ex-Mrs. Adams, showed up. She began arguing with her husband and eventually slapped him. With Chris' attention then diverted, Parsons leveled him and left the ring with Toni. The match was ruled a double-disqualification. While it wasn't really much of a "match," it was nonetheless interesting in its own way.

In other bouts: Black Bart defeated Mike Davis ... Calvin Knapp beat Dapper Dan ... The Angel of Death beat Killer Brooks ... Guido Falcone beat Chad Starr ... Crybaby Buxton beat Johnny Reb ... John Hawk bested Ricky Gonzalez.

Morristown, TN (Correspondent—Lester Grant): Tim Horner vs. Jim Cornette. It looked like a mismatch on paper, and that's exactly how it turned out. Cornette actually tried wrestling as part of The Heavenly Bodies, but Horner gave him a devil of a time.

Horner dominated the bout from the start and pummeled the manager for a few minutes



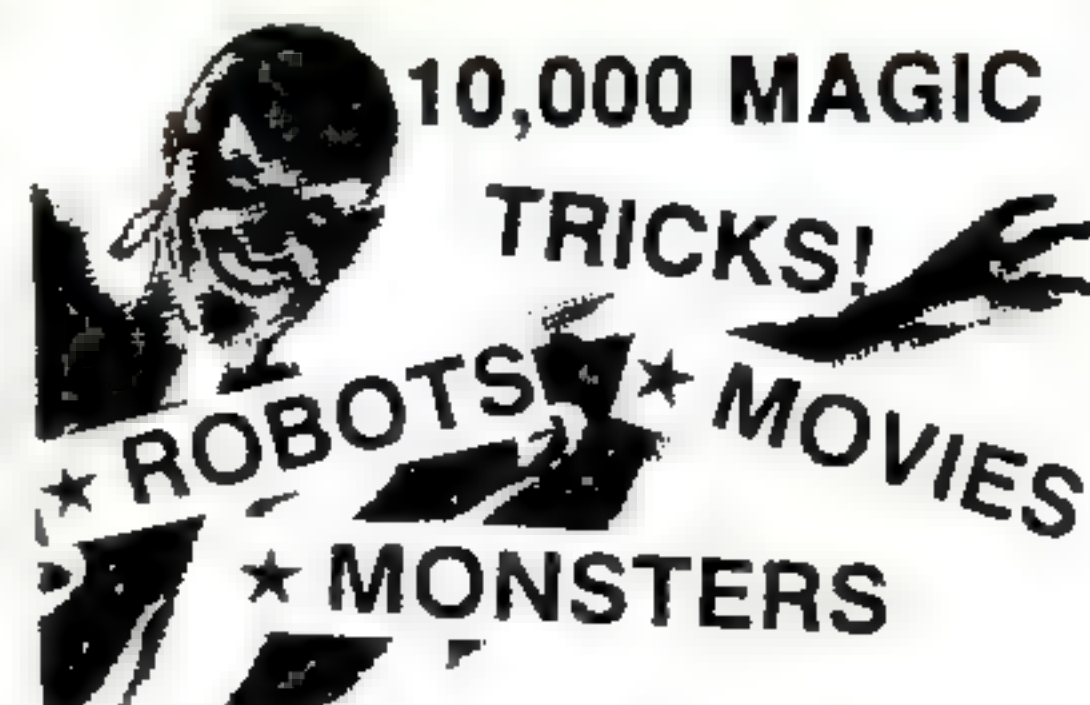
Chris Adams can no longer count on the support of his wife, Toni Adams. In fact, the two are on the outs and their conflict has spilled into the ring

before help arrived from the dressing room. "Dirty White Boy" Tony Anthony, up to his usual dastardly tricks, entered the ring and hit Horner with a chair. That wasn't all he brought to the ring. When Anthony's main rival, Tracey Smothers, arrived to help Horner, "White Boy" threw powder in his eyes.

Horner managed to recover and chased Anthony away. A blinded and disoriented

Smothers, meanwhile, began swinging wildly. He accidentally nailed Horner several times, and a brawl ensued until The Rock 'n' Roll Express broke it up. Horner was declared the winner.

In other bouts: Mongolian Stomper beat Mike Sampson ... Bobby Blaze defeated Robbie Eagle ... The Rock 'n' Roll Express defeated Dutch Mantel & Jimmy Golden ... Smothers beat Anthony in a chain match □



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YOU ASKED US

(Continued from page 16)

Since you and 'British Bulldog' Davey Boy Smith are after Big Van Vader's WCW World title, if one of you gets a title shot and the other doesn't, will there be dissension between you two the next time you team?"—Kerry Morris, Mesquite, TX

A: "Let me put your concerns to rest, Kerry," Sting said. "I don't think Vader is a good representative of WCW, and I'm glad when any of my friends down here gets a shot to knock him off. If Davey Boy gets his shot, I'm the first to offer him advice or to help him with strategy, and I'd be the first out of the locker room to shake his hand if he won it. We're true friends who will always support each other. We're trying our best to get rid of Big Van, and I'm thrilled any time I get to team with a pro like Davey Boy."

Q: "My question is for Madusa Miceli: I wish you'd come back and beat Missy Hyatt. When are you going to return to WCW?"—J. Kevin Latham, Autaugaville, AL

A: "I'm really getting sick of answering this question," Madusa replied. "Yes, I will be returning, when the time is right. I haven't decided whether I'll be returning to WCW or some other federation. As for the Missy Hyatt comment, enough is enough. I'm through proving my superiority to that bimbo. Sorry, Missy, no matter how often you deny it, you are a bimbo. I don't see you doing much broadcasting these days. I guess Ric Flair is just better than you are."

Q: "A question for Contributing



The multitasking Madusa Miceli says she'll return to competition when the time is right, though she has yet to choose a particular federation.

Editor Matt Brock: You've been covering wrestling for decades. What do you make of this situation where Jerry Lawler is practically a god in Memphis, yet he revels in the fact that WWF fans absolutely hate him?"—R.J. Clemmons, Owensboro, KY

A: "When I first started covering wrestling, it seemed pretty easy to distinguish between the fan favorites and the rule-breakers," said Brock. "Nowadays, guys change personalities as often as I change clothes. But I wouldn't get too down on Lawler. I've spent many an evening trying to get into the man's head, talking to him, trying to understand how he thinks. He's a very cagey veteran, my kind of wrestler. I think the Lawler you see in Memphis is the real

thing. He honestly loves his hometown people. But he's a wrestler by trade. When he chose to wrestle part-time in the WWF, he must have done his homework and decided the fan favorites were the weak link there. He must feel attacking guys like Bret Hart will help him rise to the top of the WWF. Still, I'll admit that, in all my years, I haven't seen a man hated and loved so intensely at the same time."

Q: "I'd like to ask one of the best big men in history, Blackjack Mulligan, who he thinks are some of the more talented large wrestlers out there today?"—Anna Reno, Washington, DC

A: "Do we have enough time to name all of them?" quipped Mulligan. "Well, Anna, I'd say that wrestling today is more dominated by big men than it's ever been before. I think in our heyday, Andre and I could still beat any of them, but I won't go into that now. Big Van Vader and Yokozuna stand out because they're world champions. I don't care how you win a world title, if the strap's around your waist, you're doin' somethin' right. Those two know how to use their size, and I don't expect to see either's reign end anytime soon. Another guy who I think is one tough hombre is The Undertaker. I don't think we've seen his full potential yet, and I've seen very few men who are as oblivious to pain as him. He does need to get rid of that manager of his—Paul Bearer. A man like Undertaker is best on his own. I look for big things out of that boy soon." □

WHAT'S HAPPENING

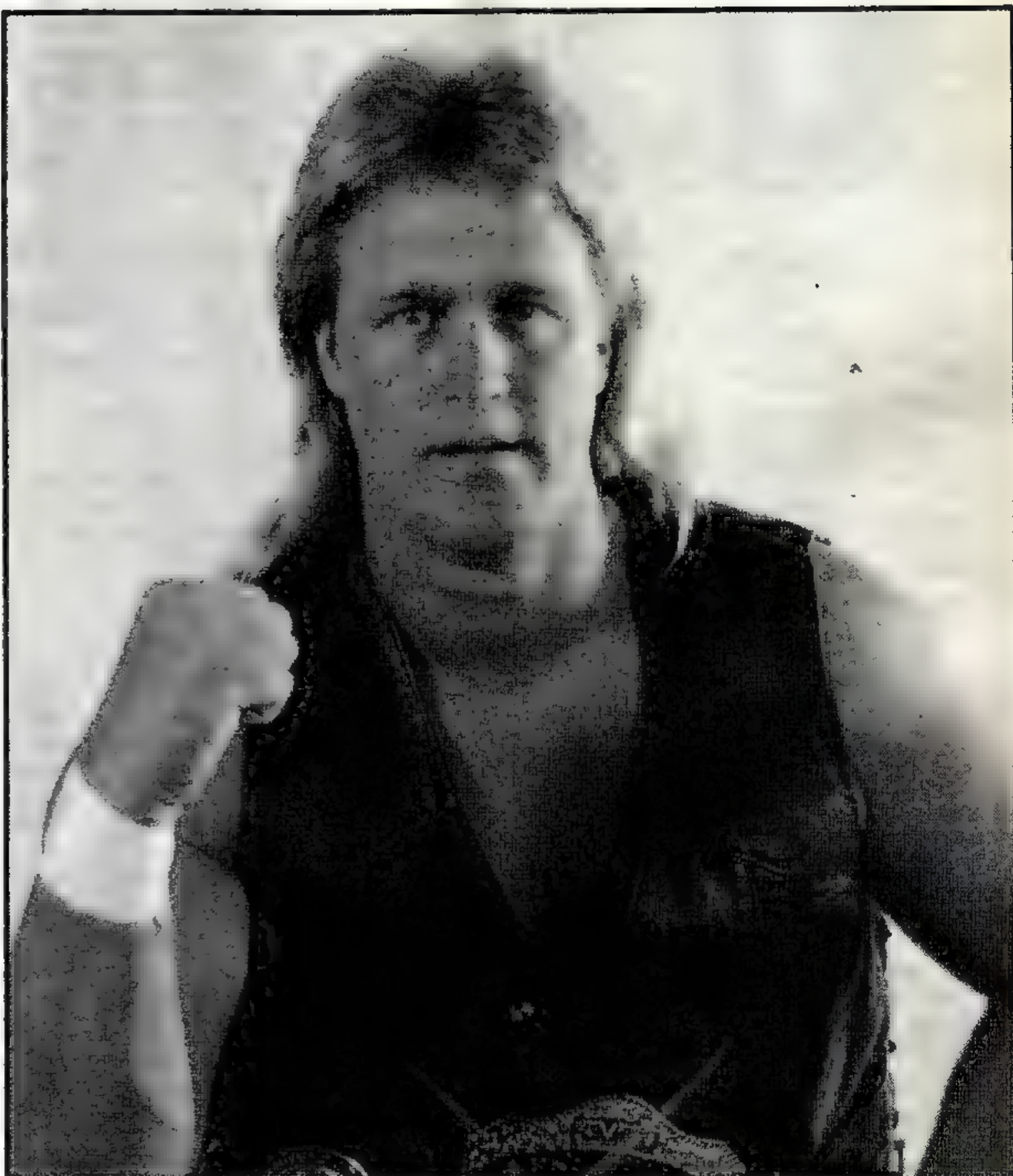
(Continued from page 7)

The duo has entered the stable of **Col. Robert Parker**. Tag wars in that federation could become a true war of attrition. Seems everybody is joining forces with someone these days.

Yokozuna has become the hottest commodity in the WWF, with five-time former champ **Hulk Hogan** concentrating more on acting since losing the World belt at "King Of The Ring." The big question buzzing around the WWF is who will the 550-pound Samoan try to squash at SummerSlam on August 30 in Auburn Hills, Michigan. My sources tell me it's all but certain that Hogan won't be at the pay-per-view bash.

The logical next choice would be **Bret Hart**, given his marvelous marathon performance in Dayton. But he's got a score to settle with **Lawler**. Perhaps **Hacksaw Duggan**, **Hennig**, **Crush** or **Tatanka** will get their moment in the spotlight. Reliable sources, however, tell me that **Sting**, of all people, is chomping at the bit to get a shot at **Yokozuna**. He's beaten another behemoth in **Vader**, and he'd love to defend the honor of America. Unfortunately he's under contract to WCW. It's a long shot, but who knows...

Big news in Smoky Mountain is that fan favorite **Brian Lee** is now following the rulebreaker creed. After **Tracey Smothers** fended off a challenge from **Kevin Sullivan** in a \$20,000 bounty match, Lee helped him clear the ring of Sullivan and interfering menace "**Dirty White Boy**" **Tony Anthony**. Lee raised a weary Smothers' hand in victory, then clotheslined him, hammered him with a chair, and bru-



Former Smoky Mountain TV champion **Brian Lee** has become a rulebreaker, allied with manager **Tammy Fytch**, and is in the running for the federation's \$20,000 bounty.

talized him with a series of kneedrops from the top rope.

Lee, who retired the SMW TV title after five successful defenses, has formed an alliance with manager-executive wannabe **Tammy Fytch** and plans to pursue the \$20,000 bounty himself.

On the heels of WCW's legends extravaganza at Slamboree '93 comes a new tour organized by Good Sport Promotions of Tennessee. It will be called "The Legends & Legacy Tour." It'll last through most of the summer and take place at various state fairs and carnivals. Some of the veterans

lined up are **Honky Tonk Man**, **Wahoo McDaniel**, **Manny Fernandez**, **Stan Lane**, **Ivan Koloff**, and **Ronnie and Jim Garvin**.

Finally, I should mention a fabulous book that recently passed by my desk. It's called *Wrestling Title Histories* and provides a comprehensive look at the many belts in this sport, including who held them, when, and for how long. Great reading for the diehard fan. For more information, write to: 7600 N. Galena Rd., Peoria, IL 61615.

That's what's happening. See you at the matches! □

SPOTLIGHTS

Every month, *The Wrestler* will comb through its extensive photo files and shine its spotlight on an outstanding wrestler, manager, or tag team. We'll present unforgettable highlights in the action-packed careers of the sport's greatest stars, culled from the most extensive photographic archives anywhere in the wrestling world!

"RAVISHING RICK RUDE"

"RAVISHING" RICK RUDE is frequently praised as one of wrestling's most complete athletes. He is equally booed by fans who despise his smug attitude.

He's currently battling Dustin Rhodes for WCW's held-up U.S. title. Rude contends he never lost the belt, and is technically correct; he was stripped months ago when an injury prevented him from defending. Rhodes won a title tournament, but the belt was declared held up after a controversial double-pin situation. Videotape replays showed both Rude and Rhodes lifted their shoulders just before the three-count.

A former arm-wrestling champ, Rude debuted as a wrestler in 1983, entering Jimmy Hart's Mid-South stable and feuding with Jerry Lawler. He allied himself with Percy Pringle in Florida and won the Southern championship from Pez Whatley in January 1985. Pringle's interference caused him to lose the belt to B. Brian Blair.

Rude moved to World Class Championship Wrestling in 1985, where, as the "Smooth Operator," he won the World Class belt from Iceman Parsons that November. During his reign he broke Bruiser Brody's arm, and eventually fell out with Pringle after losing the title to Chris Adams on July 4, 1986.

Rude joined the WWF in 1987,



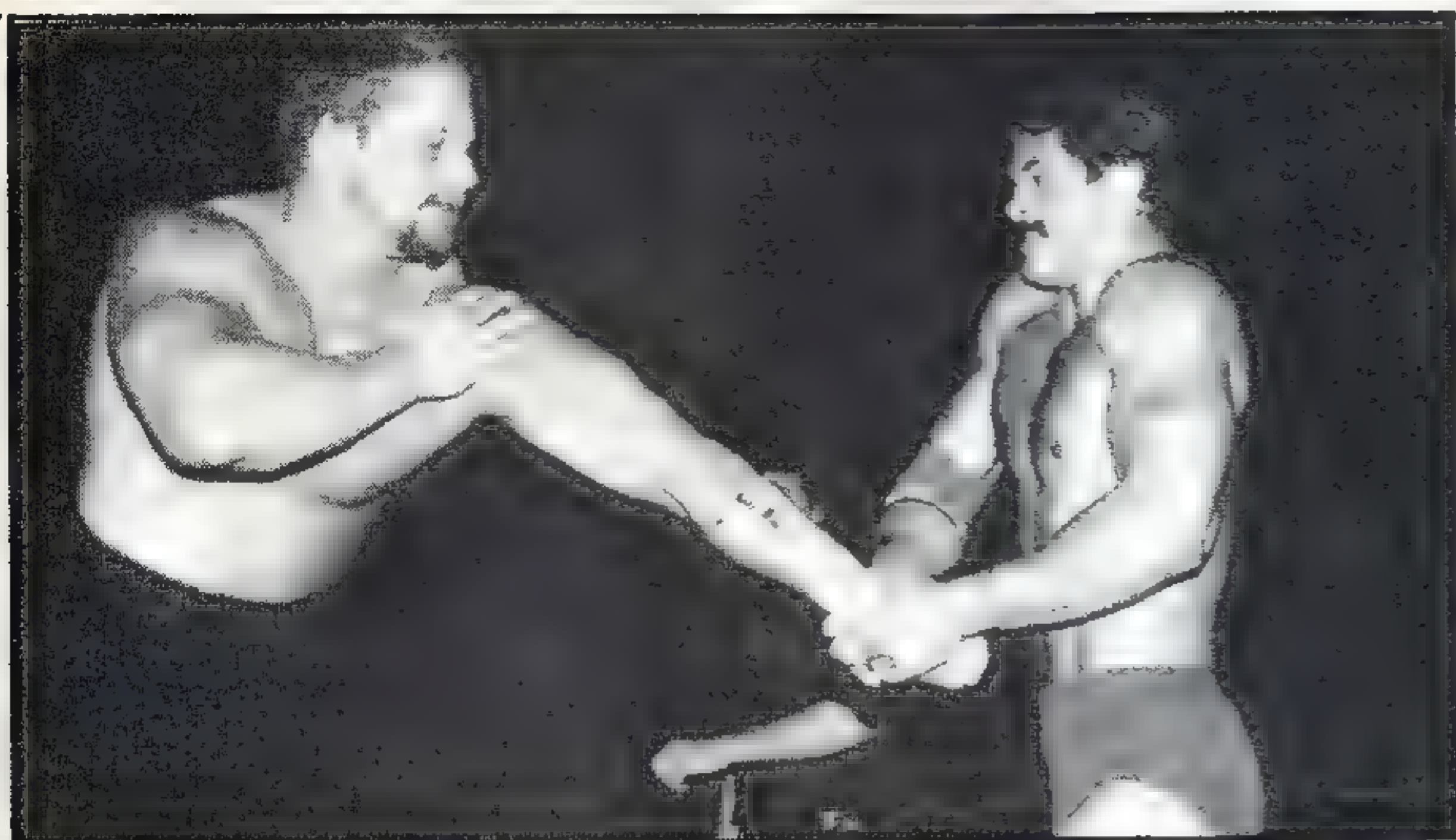
signed with Bobby Heenan, and targeted Jake Roberts and Paul Orndorff. He enraged Roberts by trying to kiss his wife, Cheryl. During a posedown in January of 1989, Heenan and Rude attacked The Ultimate Warrior, leading to a WrestleMania V showdown. The "Ravishing One" scored a controversial pin to become Intercontinental champion. Warrior regained the belt at SummerSlam after Roddy Piper mooned Rude at ringside.

Rude's feuds grew. He and Piper ultimately locked horns in a brutal steel cage war. He and Heenan fell

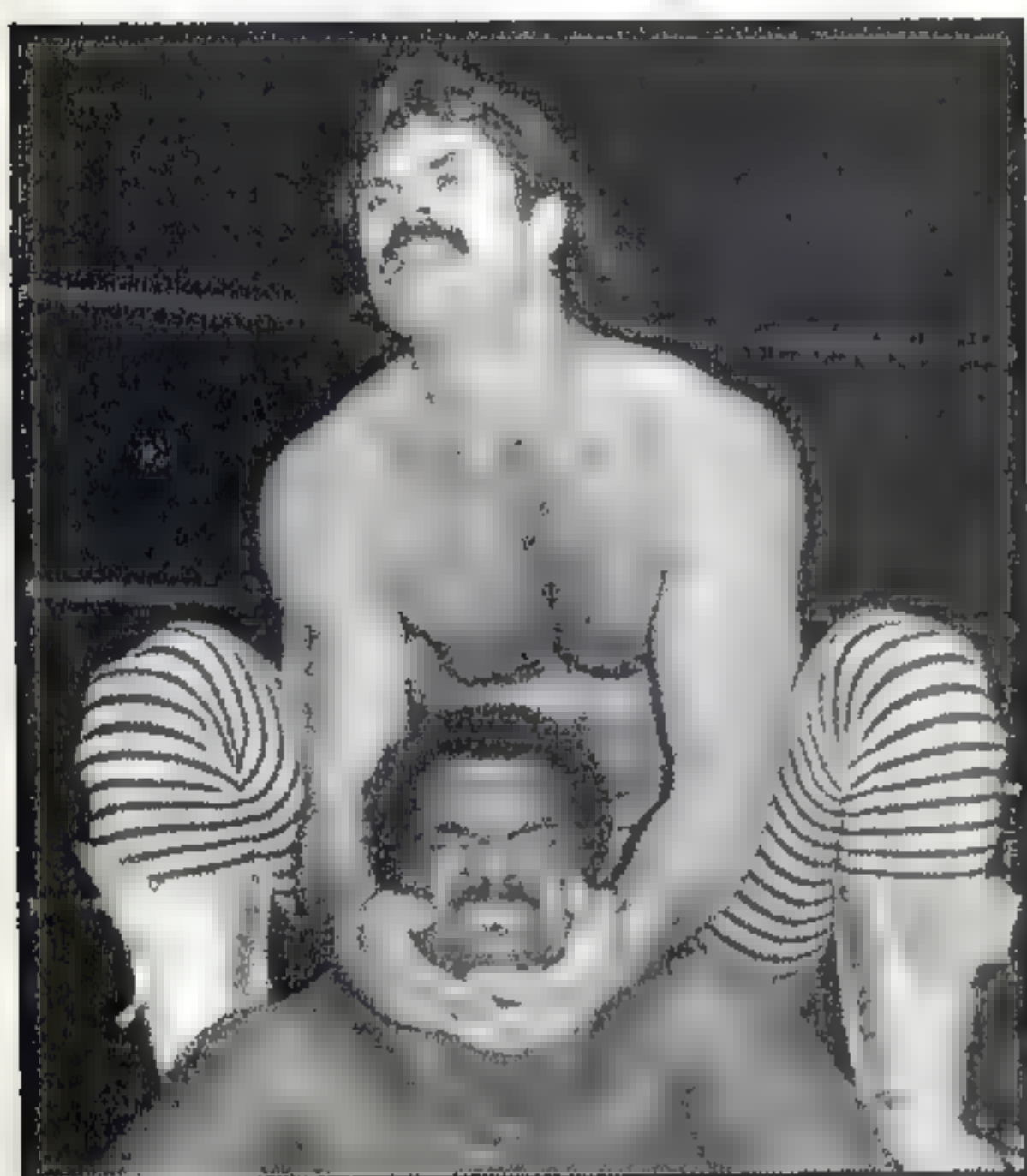
out, and Rude failed in title shots against then-WWF champion Warrior.

He moved to WCW at Halloween Havoc in 1991, wrestling as the masked Halloween Phantom. After defeating Tom Zenk, Rude revealed his identity, joining Paul E. Dangerously's Dangerous Alliance. He defeated Sting at Clash of the Champions XVII in November of 1991 to become U.S. champion, and viciously attacked the fan favorite's knee.

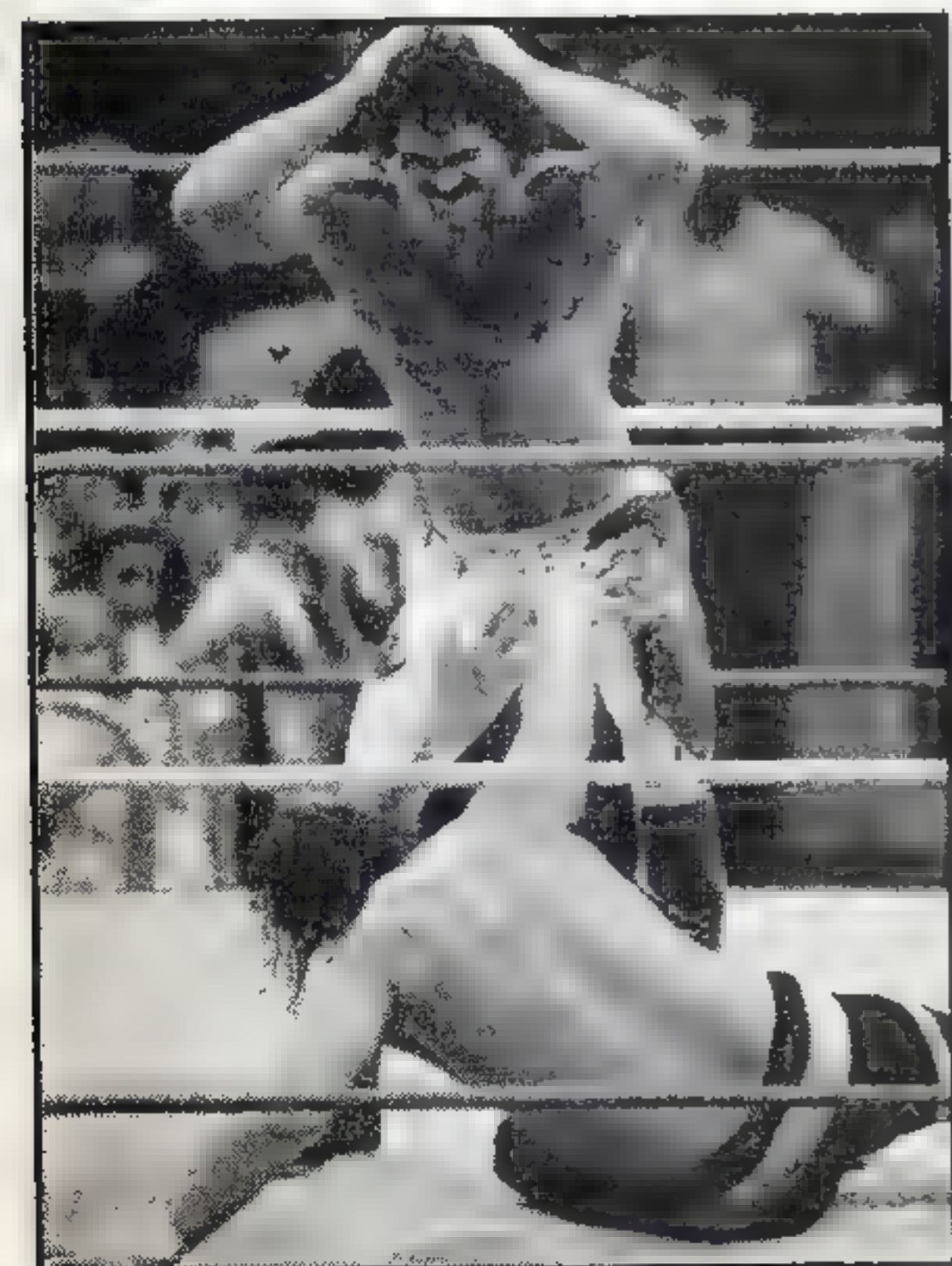
Rude's arrogant demeanor obviously warrants time in the "Spotlight."



June 1983: Rick Rude debuted a decade ago, taking on such quality opponents as Road Warrior Hawk during his rookie year, and having his share of success.

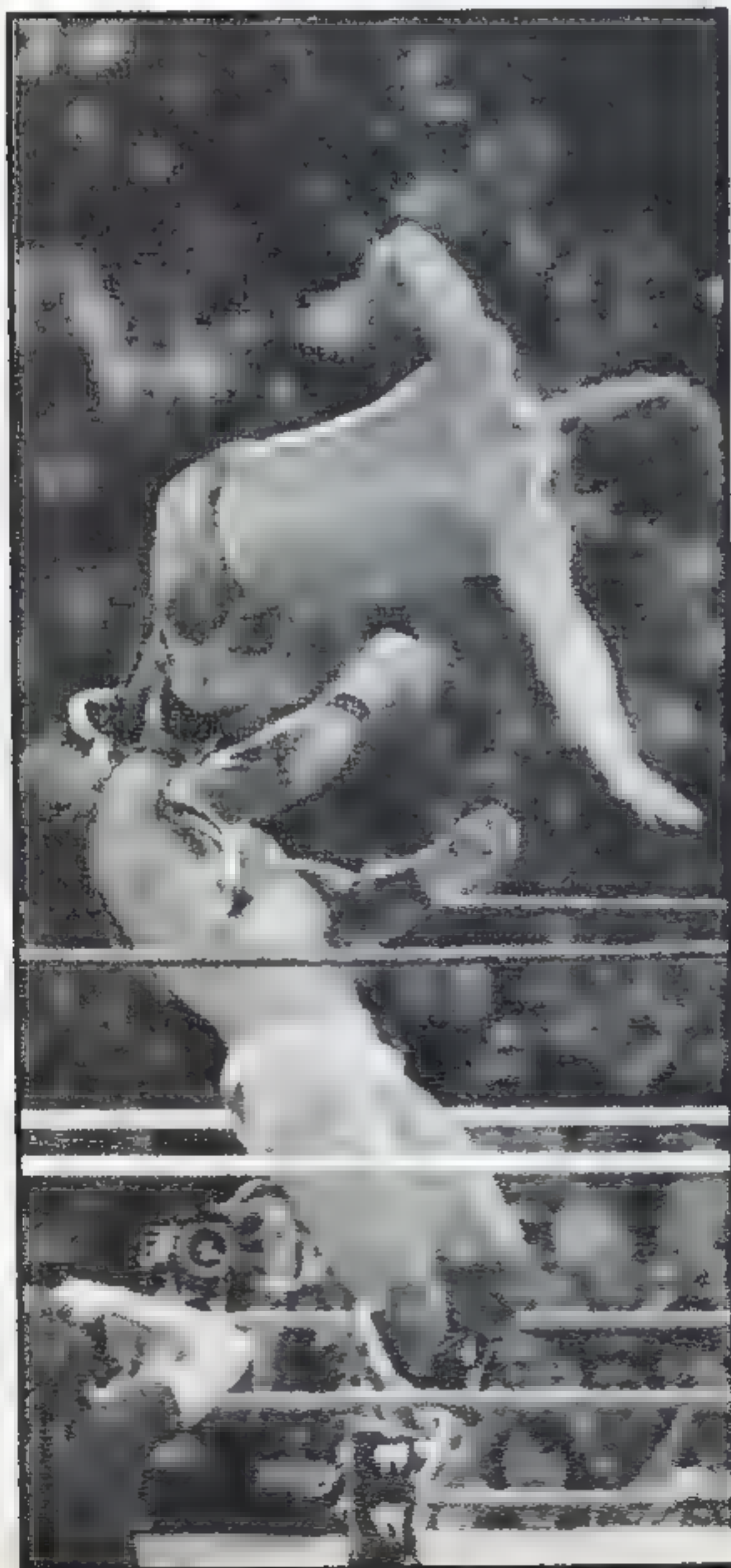


January 1985: Rude applies a rear chinlock on Pez Whatley en route to winning the Southern championship.

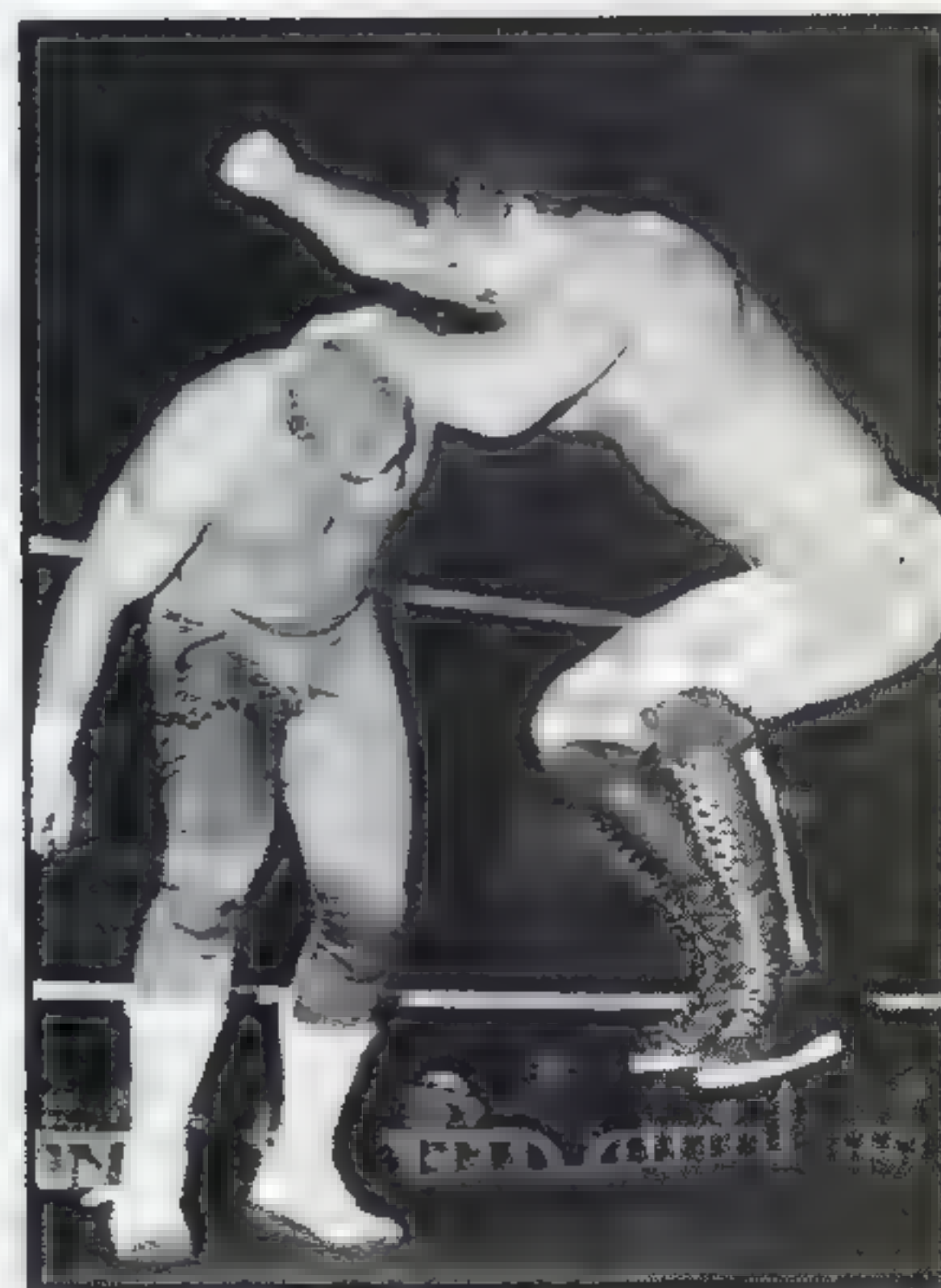


July 1988: Rude chortles while dominating Jake Roberts during their memorable feud in the WWF.

April 1989: Rude's high-water mark in the WWF came when he defeated The Ultimate Warrior at WrestleMania V for the Intercontinental title.



November 1985: Rude stands over Iceman Parsons, having just beaten him for the World Class Championship Wrestling title. He soon would trade in these horizontal tights for more fashionable attire for his ring battles.



November 1991: Rude begins his 13-month U.S. title reign in Savannah, Georgia, taking advantage of Sting, whose knee was injured earlier in the night in a sneak-attack by Lex Luger and the beautiful but dangerous Madusa.

BEYOND THE SQUARED CIRCLE



▲ Davey Boy Smith is so Americanized, he knows the lyrics to "Take Me Out To The Ballgame," and sang them to fans at Tiger Stadium recently. What next, Bulldog-batting behind Cecil Fielder?



▲ Samoan Afa gets some last-minute nourishment from a pineapple, just before *Monday Night Raw*.



▲ Here's how Sherri looks so sensational! Ms. Martel gets her hair done on a WWF stop in St. Louis.



◀ New York State Athletic Commissioner Randy Gordon, a former editor of *The Wrestler*, poses with Johnny B. Badd.



▲ Perhaps Capt. Lou Albano is reminding former heavyweight boxing champ Evander Holyfield that Jack Dempsey and Joe Louis turned to wrestling once their boxing careers ended.



▲ Mongolian Mauler (left) exchanges pleasantries with heavyweight boxer Tex Cobb.



▲ Two of wrestling's greats: Sgt. Slaughter (left) and Arnold Skaaland, legendary manager of Bruno Sammartino and Bob Backlund.

◀ Ted DiBiase (left) gets some rulebreaking tips from veterans Rip Hawk (center) and Killer Kowalski.

Wrestler^{THE}

TOP 10

- 1 YOKOZUNA**
550, Samoa
(*) WWF World champion
- 2 BIG VAN VADER**
404, Denver, CO
(1) WCW World champion
- 3 BRET HART**
235, Calgary, Alberta
(*) No. 2 contender: WWF World title
- 4 DAVEY BOY SMITH**
245, Leeds, England
(3) No. 2 contender: WCW World title
- 5 BARRY WINDHAM**
263, Sweetwater, TX
(4) NWA champion
- 6 SHAWN MICHAELS**
220, San Antonio, TX
(7) WWF Intercontinental champion
- 7 LEX LUGER**
290, Chicago, IL
(2) No. 3 contender: WWF World title
- 8 TRACEY SMOTHERS**
227, Atlanta, GA
(10) Smoky Mountain Champion
- 9 SID VICIOUS**
318, West Memphis, AR
(*) No. 3 contender: WCW World title
- 10 CURT HENNIG**
235, Minneapolis, MN
(8) No. 4 contender: WWF World title



Davey Boy Smith

TAG TEAMS

- 1 RICK & SCOTT STEINER**
Combined weight: 483 Pounds
(10) WWF World tag team champions
- 2 THE HOLLYWOOD BLONDS**
Combined weight: 467 Pounds
(1) WCW World tag team champions
- 3 HULK HOGAN & BRUTUS BEEFCAKE**
Combined weight: 573 Pounds
(2) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 4 BIG VAN VADER & SID VICIOUS**
Combined weight: 722 Pounds
(*) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 5 MONEY INC.**
Combined weight: 492 Pounds
(5) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 6 STING & DAVEY BOY SMITH**
Combined weight: 505 Pounds
(*) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 7 THE HEADSHRINKERS**
Combined weight: 520 Pounds
(3) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 8 THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS**
Combined weight: 453 Pounds
(6) Smoky Mountain tag team champions
- 9 2 COLD SCORPIO & MARCUS BAGWELL**
Combined weight: 460 Pounds
(4) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 10 NEW JACK & HOMEBOY**
Combined weight: 470 Pounds
(*) USWA tag team champions

WCW

World Champion:
BIG VAN VADER
(C) 404, Denver, CO

- 1—BARRY WINDHAM**
(1) 263, Sweetwater, TX
- 2—DAVEY BOY SMITH**
(3) 245, Leeds, England
- 3—DUSTIN RHODES**
(2) 254, Austin, TX
- 4—STING**
(4) 260, Venice Beach, CA
- 5—MAXX PAYNE**
(9) 350, Iowa City, IA
- 6—SID VICIOUS**
(6) 318, West Memphis, AR
- 7—RON SIMMONS**
(*) 260, Perry, GA
- 8—ARN ANDERSON**
(7) 249, Minneapolis, MN
- 9—RICK RUDE**
(5) 246, Robbinsdale, MN
- 10—PAUL ORDORFF**
(8) 253, Brandon, FL

WWF

World Champion:
YOKOZUNA
(C) 505, Samoa

- 1—SHAWN MICHAELS**
(5) 220, San Antonio, TX
- 2—BRET HART**
(4) 235, Calgary, Alberta
- 3—LEX LUGER**
(2) 290, Chicago, IL
- 4—HULK HOGAN**
(C) 300, Venice Beach, CA
- 5—CURT HENNIG**
(3) 240, Minneapolis, MN
- 6—TATANKA**
(7) 260, Miami, FL
- 7—CRUSH**
(10) 310, Honolulu, HI
- 8—RAZOR RAMON**
(*) 291, Minneapolis, MN
- 9—BAM BAM BIGELOW**
(*) 368, Mt. Laurel, NJ
- 10—MR. HUGHES**
(*) 308, Kansas City, KS

GLOBAL

North American Champion:
STEVIE RAY
(C) 265, Dallas, TX

- 1—ROD PRICE**
(*) 265, Los Angeles, CA
- 2—CHRIS ADAMS**
(4) 228, Stratford, England
- 3—ICEMAN PARSONS**
(5) 245, St. Louis, Mo
- 4—ANGEL OF DEATH**
(1) 310, Los Angeles, CA
- 5—BLACK BART**
(7) 261, Pampa, TX
- 6—AL PEREZ**
(*) 239, Tampa, FL
- 7—KILLER BROOKS**
(9) 254, Waxahachie, TX
- 8—JOHN TATUM**
(*) 236, Hollywood, CA
- 9—STEVE SIMPSON**
(*) 205, Dallas, TX
- 10—JOHNNY MANTELL**
(*) 260, Dallas, TX

USWA

USWA Champion:
OWEN HART
(C) 223, Calgary, Alberta

- 1—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**
(2) 230, Memphis, TN
- 2—JERRY LAWLER**
(1) 234, Memphis, TN
- 3—PAPA SHANGO**
(C) 340, parts unknown
- 4—JEFF JARRETT**
(3) 220, Hendersonville, TN
- 5—THE UNDERTAKER**
(*) 320, parts unknown
- 6—KOKO B. WARE**
(4) 229, Union City, TN
- 7—JEFF GAYLORD**
(5) 280, St. Louis, Mo
- 8—BILLY TRAVIS**
(6) 218, Houston, TX
- 9—WOLFIE D**
(7) 250, parts unknown
- 10—ROCK 'N' ROLL PHANTOM**
(9) 245, parts unknown

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue, while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

MOST POPULAR

- 1 BRET HART**
235, Calgary, Alberta
Last issue: No. 5 Most Popular
- 2 DAVEY BOY SMITH**
245, Leeds, England
Last issue: No. 2 Most Popular
- 3 HULK HOGAN**
300, Venice, CA
Last issue: No. 1 Most Popular
- 4 CURT HENNIG**
235, Minneapolis, MN
Last issue: No. 8 Most Popular
- 5 STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
Last issue: No. 4 Most Popular
- 6 DUSTIN RHODES**
254, Austin, TX
Last issue: No. 6 Most Popular
- 7 TATANKA**
260, Miami, FL
Last issue: unrated
- 8 JEFF JARRETT**
220, Hendersonville, TN
Last issue: No. 10 Most Popular
- 9 2 COLD SCORPIO**
222, Denver, Co
Last issue: No. 9 Most Popular
- 10 CRUSH**
310, Honolulu, HI
Last issue: unrated

MOST HATED

- 1 YOKOZUNA**
505, Samoa
Last issue: No. 2 Most Hated
- 2 BIG VAN VADER**
404, Denver, CO
Last issue: No. 1 Most Hated
- 3 SHAWN MICHAELS**
220, San Antonio, TX
Last issue: unrated
- 4 BARRY WINDHAM**
263, Sweetwater, TX
Last issue: No. 5 Most Hated
- 5 SID VICIOUS**
318, West Memphis, AR
Last issue: No. 7 Most Hated
- 6 LEX LUGER**
290, Chicago, IL
Last issue: No. 3 Most Hated
- 7 RICK RUDE**
246, Robbinsdale, MN
Last issue: No. 4 Most Hated
- 8 TONY ANTHONY**
235, Bucksnort, TN
Last issue: No. 8 Most Hated
- 9 BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**
230, Memphis, TN
Last issue: unrated
- 10 THE KID**
201, Tampa, FL
Last issue: No. 7 Most Popular

For period ended June 25, 1993

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of these issues in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only, and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a first-place rating, nine for second place, and so on. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, with a possible maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

- 1—BRET HART.....74 points**
- 2—BIG VAN VADER57 points**
- 3—SHAWN MICHAELS45 points**
- 4—RON SIMMONS.....39 points**
- 5—RICK RUDE.....32 points**

TAG TEAMS

- 1—MONEY INC.72 points**
- 2—RICK STEAMBOAT & SHANE DOUGLAS 57 points**
- 3—THE HOLLYWOOD BLONDS56 points**
- 4—RICK & SCOTT STEINER.....47 points**
- 5—THE HEADSHRINKERS.....37 points**

SMOKY MOUNTAIN

Smoky Mountain Champion:

TRACEY SMOTHERS

(C) 227, Atlanta, GA

- 1—TONY ANTHONY**
(2) 235, Bucksnort, TN
- 2—BRIAN LEE**
(3) 251, Los Angeles, CA
- 3—KILLER KYLE**
(4) 303, Atlanta, GA
- 4—KEVIN SULLIVAN**
(6) 252, Boston, Ma
- 5—TIM HORNER**
(5) 235, Morristown, TN
- 6—RICK MORTON**
(7) 228, Memphis, TN
- 7—TOM PRICHARD**
(8) 220, Houston, TX
- 8—MIKE SAMSON**
(*) 235, parts unknown
- 9—MONGOLIAN STOMPER**
(9) 239, Mongolia
- 10—CHRIS CANDIDO**
(10) 226, Carteret, NJ

IWCCW

IWCCW Champion:

TITLE VACANT

(C) To be determined in tourney

- 1—GREG VALENTINE**
(1) 243, Seattle, WA
- 2—KOKO B. WARE**
(3) 229, Union City, TN
- 3—HERCULES**
(2) 255, Tampa, FL
- 4—JOE SAVOLDI**
(5) 220, Parsippany, NJ
- 5—TONY ATLAS**
(4) 247, Roanoke, VA
- 6—KENDALL WINDHAM**
(7) 220, Sweetwater, TX
- 7—LANCE VON ERICH**
(6) 260, Arlington, TX
- 8—JOHNNY WILDSIDE**
(10) 285, parts unknown
- 9—TASMANIAC**
(8) 232, Tasmania
- 10—TOMMY DREAMER**
(9) 245, Yonkers, NY

BIG D: Big D Champion—Bill Irwin; 1—Big D; 2—Steven Dane; 3—Terry Simms; 4—Calvin Knapp; 5—Guido Falcone; 6—Action Jackson; 7—Scott Braddock; 8—Mr. Mister; 9—Billy Travis; 10—John Hawk.

ECW: ECW Champion—Don Muraco; 1—Jimmy Snuka; 2—Terry Funk; 3—Hawk; 4—Eddie Gilbert; 5—Ivan Koloff; 6—The Sandman; 7—Salvatore Bellomo; 8—Johnny Hot Body; 9—Stan Hansen/322, Borger, TX; 10—Dark Patriot.

ICWA: ICWA Champion—Frankie Rose; 1—Cuban Assassin; 2—Top Gun Assassin; 3—Jeff Bradley; 4—Verne Henderson; 5—Rico Fredrico; 6—Lord Of Discipline; 7—Jumbo Barretta; 8—Ned Brady; 9—Billy Mack; 10—Gary Nice.

PWA: PWA Champion—The Hater; 1—Tommy Ferrara; 2—Charlie Norris; 3—Billy Blaze; 4—Rocky Rice; 5—Horace the Psychopath; 6—Masked Jungle Fighter; 7—Brad Rheingans; 8—El Torro; 9—J.B. Trask; 10—Man of the '90s.

PWF: PWF Champion—Italian Stallion; 1—George South; 2—Flaming Youth; 3—Cruel Connection II; 4—Terry Austin; 5—Scotty McKeever; 6—Russian Assassin I; 7—Star Ryder; 8—Killozer; 9—Scotty Hot Body; 10—Super Brat.

USA: USA TV Champion—Col. DeBeers; 1—Jimmy Snuka; 2—Max Steele; 3—Lou Andrews; 4—Jesse Barr; 5—Bart Sawyer; 6—Bruiser Brian; 7—Karl Pope; 8—John Rambo; 9—Dane Rush; 10—C.W. Bergstrom.

WWA: WWA Champion—The Spider; 1—Chris Evans; 2—Ed the Razor; 3—Shasheem; 4—Bobby Salsa; 5—Boy Gone Bad; 6—Chris Candido; 7—Barry Hardy; 8—Duane Gill; 9—Scott Vido; 10—Abbuda Singh.

WWC: WWC Universal Champion—Carlos Colon; 1—The Mountie; 2—Invader I; 3—Killer Karl Wallace; 4—Ron Harris; 5—Don Harris; 6—Jose Luis Rivera; 7—Abdullah the Butcher; 8—Giant Warrior; 9—Ricky Santana; 10—Mohammed Hussein.

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating over 200 wrestlers in 20 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.



The Lightning Kid

It's a thin line between love and hate. That was the title of a 1971 soul hit for The Persuaders, and a song The Pretenders revived on an album several years back. That phrase applies to The Kid (not to be confused with *Kid*, an early Pretenders' hit), who's run the gamut of fans' emotions in little more than a month.

This Kid became the toast of the WWF community on the May 17 *Monday Night Raw*, pulling a gargantuan upset by pinning Razor Ramon before a delighted Manhattan Center crowd. The one-time Lightning Kid had performed capably in Japan, but few thought he'd overcome a 90-pound weight disadvantage. He did just that thanks to a quick reversal, and the "1-2-3" Kid soared to seventh in the Most Popular ratings in the September 1993 issue of *THE WRESTLER*.

Ramon sought revenge, offering Kid \$2,500, then \$5,000. Both times Kid declined, saying he feared reprisal from Mr. Machismo. He finally accepted after the ante was redoubled to \$10,000.

The rematch was set for the June 21 *Raw*, up the Hudson River in Poughkeepsie. But before Kid stepped into the ring, he grabbed Ramon's 10-grand, hurried out the arena, and rode off into the night. Though some fans despise his actions, he's still in their hearts for putting a big one over on Ramon.

Perhaps this segment should have been headlined after a Steve Miller song—"Take The Money And Run."

Teaming up for action. The tag team ratings seem to be livelier than they've been in months, and you can attribute it to the solo stars who are teaming up these days. That's especially true in WCW, where World champion Big Van Vader has allied with the up-and-coming Sid Vicious, and Sting has joined forces with Davey Boy Smith. The WWF is part of this trend as well, with ex-champ Hulk Hogan appearing to be more interested in his team with Brutus Beefcake than with his solo career.

The two aforementioned WCW teams are legitimate threats

to current titleholders Steve Austin and Brian Pillman. Add number-three contenders 2 Cold Scorpio & Marcus Alexander Bagwell into the mix, and you have potential for lots of excitement.

The WWF situation is somewhat less volatile, but just as fascinating. Now that Rick and Scott Steiner are finally champs, will Hogan and Beefcake get a title shot? How about the improving Headshrinkers? And don't discount former beltholders Irwin R. Schyster and Ted DiBiase, or The Smokin' Gunns. There are also several new contenders, such as Simply Divine (ex-USWA tag champs Rex King and Steve Doll), and Men On A Mission.

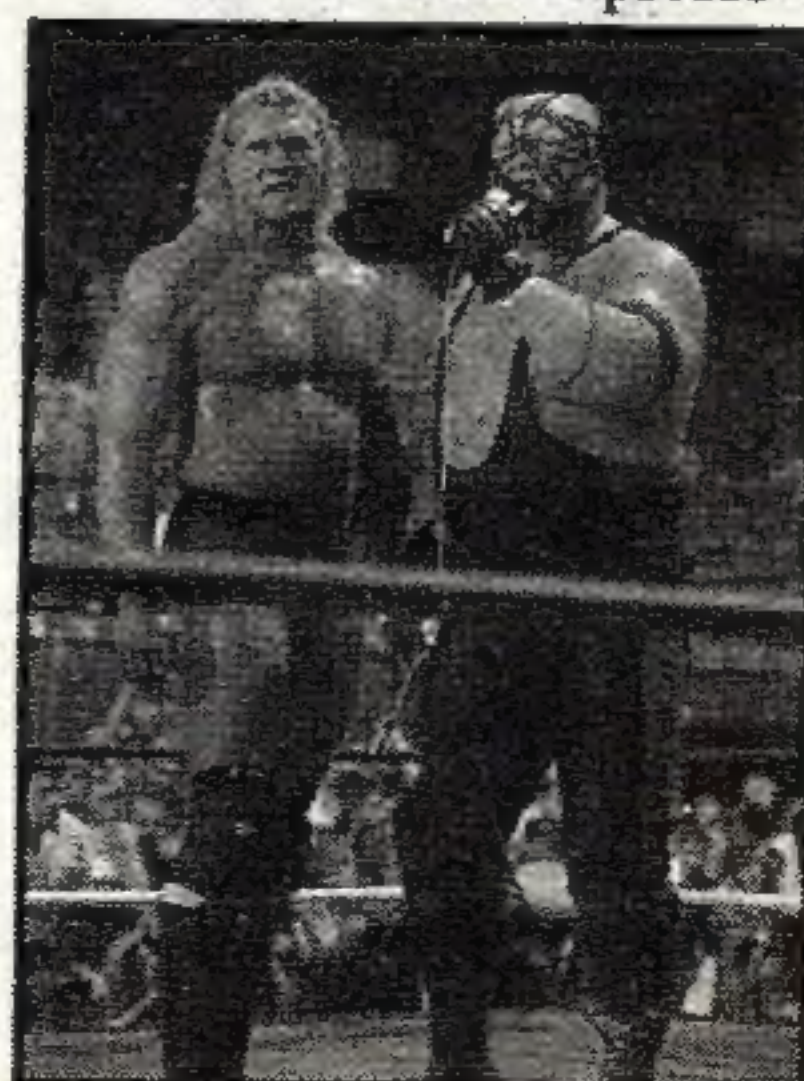
We may not see a repeat of mid-June, when the Steiners and Money Inc. engaged in a six-day, three-match title tug-of-war. But don't be surprised if some of these tag title reigns turn out to be awfully short.

Why is Bret number two? Bret Hart's fans should be in an extremely good mood as this is written. He's coming off a magnificent victory at the "King Of The Ring" tournament, and has to be seen as the chief threat to Yokozuna's World title.

So why is "The Hitman" listed as the WWF's number-two contender?

Here's why. It's our policy in the WWF ratings to automatically list the Intercontinental champion (currently Shawn Michaels) as the number-one contender; a similar standard exists in WCW, where the NWA champ (Barry Windham) is the top-rated contender.

Hart has been impressive, no doubt. But let's just remind his fans that he suffers a loss to Lex Luger every now and then, which is why he's third in our top 10, behind Yokozuna and Vader.



Big Van Vader and Sid Vicious

"What we have here is a failure to communicate." Even if you don't know what film that line came from (*Cool Hand Luke*), drop us a line, with your thoughts on our ratings or our analysis of the ratings. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o *THE WRESTLER*, Box 956, Fort Washington, PA 19034. □

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